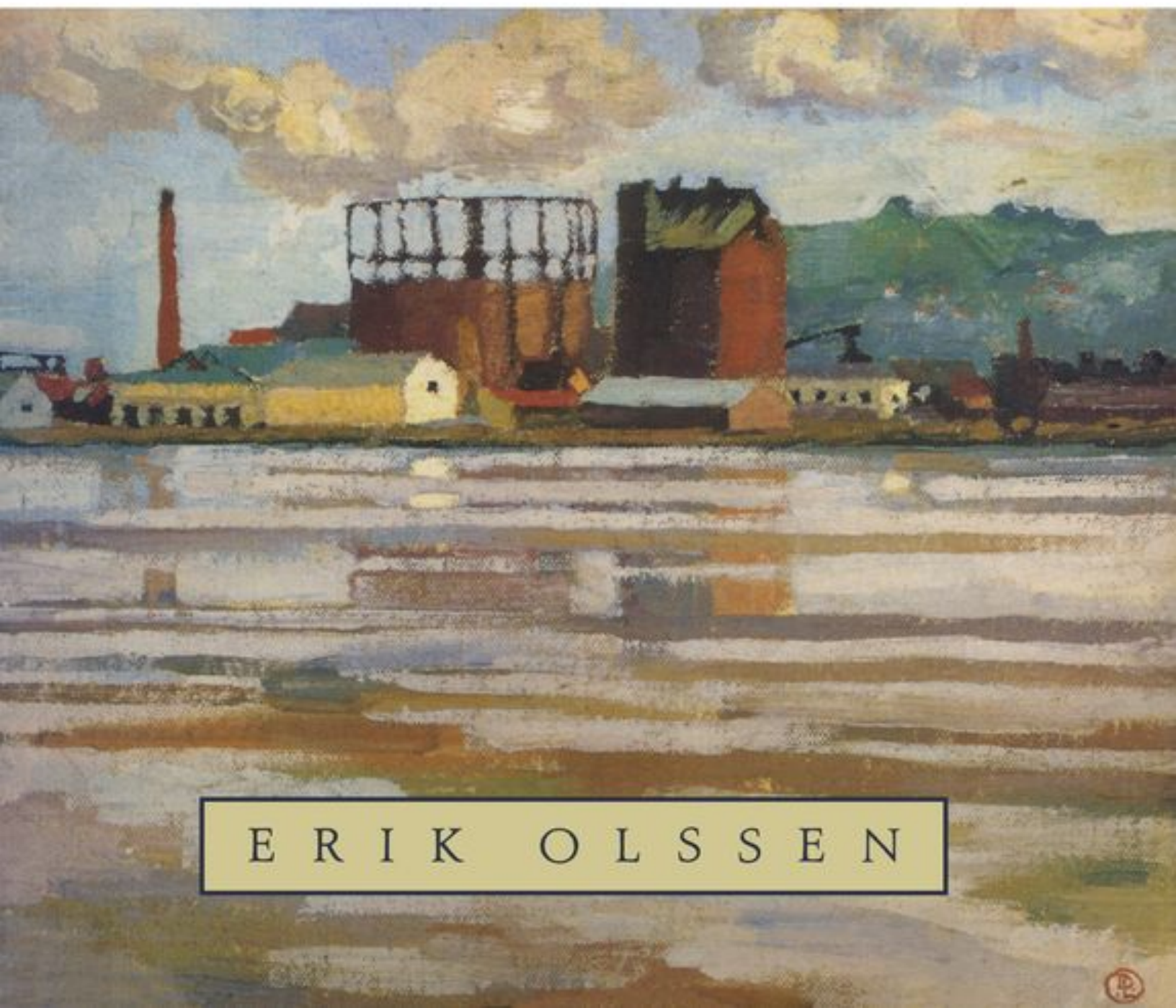


# BUILDING THE NEW WORLD

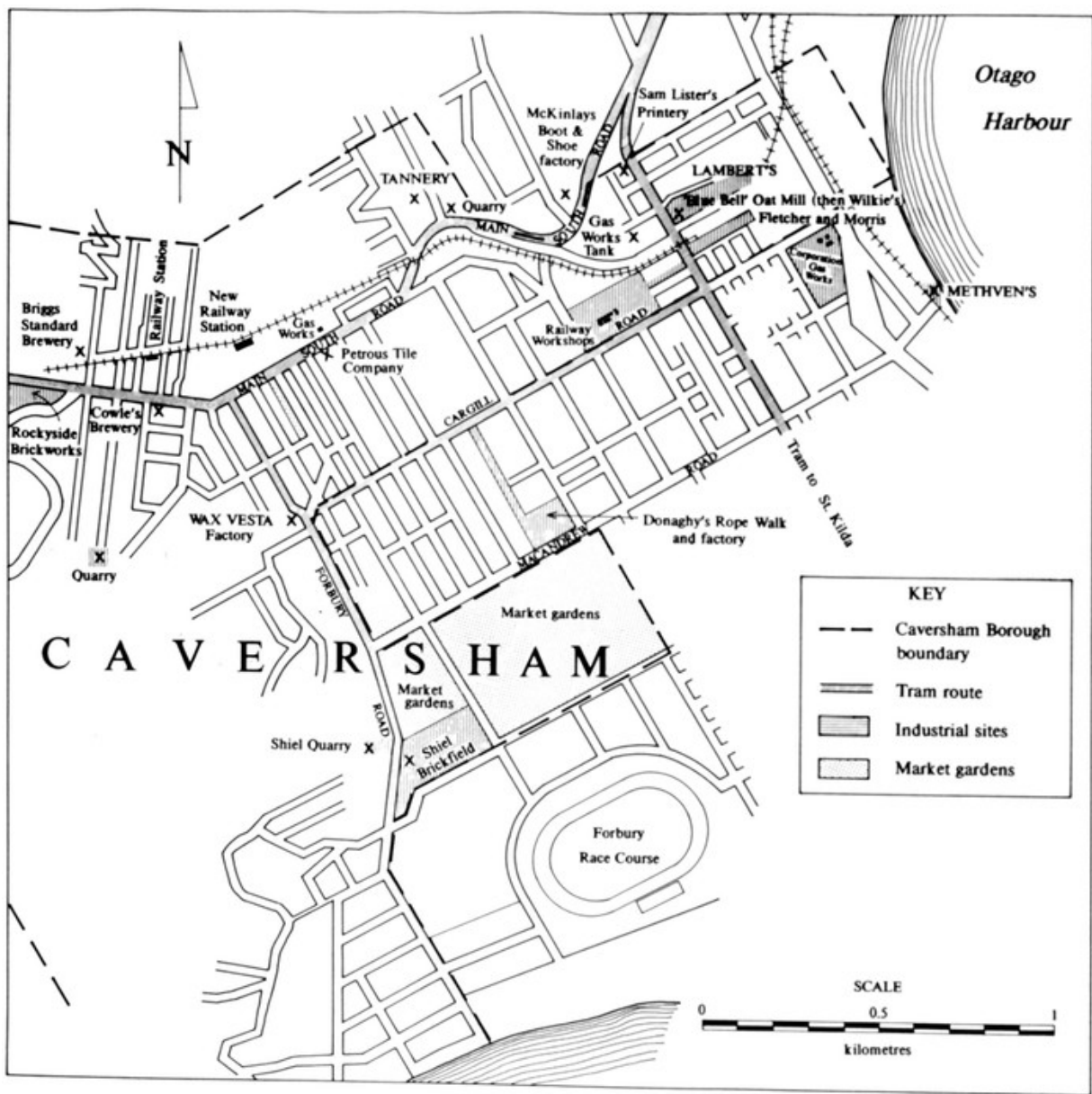
*work, politics and society in Caversham 1880s ~ 1920s*



ERIK OLSEN



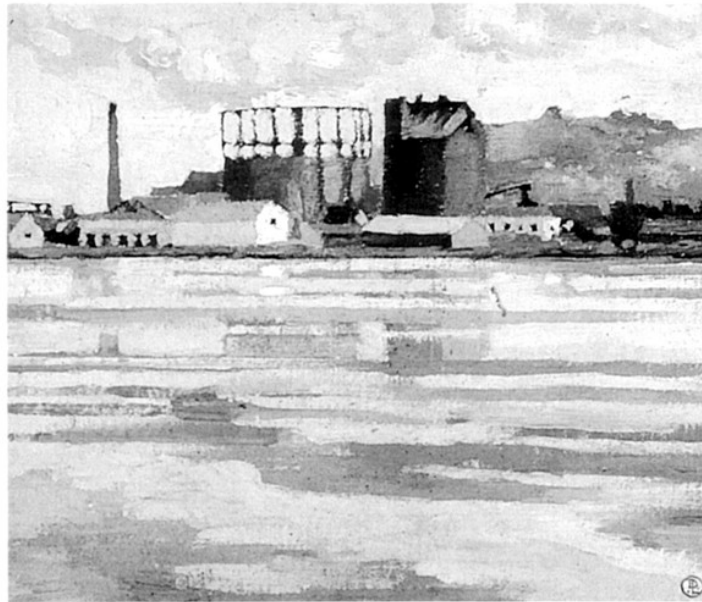
# **BUILDING THE NEW WORLD**



# BUILDING THE NEW WORLD

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*work, politics and society in Caversham 1880s-1920s*



E R I K O L S S E N

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ASC&J	Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners
ASRS	Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants
IC&A	Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration
LRC	Labour Representation Committee
MHR	Member of the House of Representatives (before 1908)
MP	Member of Parliament (after 1908 when the colony became a Dominion)
OLC	Otago Labour Council
RTA	Railway Tradesmen's Association
SDP	Social Democrat Party
T&LC	Trades and Labour Council
WPC	Workers' Political Committee (also known as Workingman's Political Committee)

## **NOTE ON LABOUR ORGANISATIONS**

The first Trades and Labour Council existed from 1881 until 1886 and was re-formed in 1889, surviving until 1912. It consisted of two delegates from each affiliated union. In 1892 it took the initiative in forming the Workers' Political Committee. The executive of the T&LC and two delegates from each affiliate constituted the WPC. The WPC existed until 1905 when it retired in favour of the new national Political Labour League (1904–09). In the confusing period which followed, individuals and unions could join various national organisations but they took political action locally by

forming a Labour Representation Committee.

In 1913, having rejected affiliation with any national organisation, the T&LC formed an Otago Labour Council with combined industrial and political functions. In 1914 the OLC affiliated with the United Federation of Labour and divested itself of its political role, forming a Labour Representation Committee. In 1916 the LRC and the OLC affiliated with the New Zealand Labour Party.

## *Preface*

This book of essays has allowed me to draw together research done for various purposes over twenty years. I started the research for the chapters on politics in the early 1970s when asked to write an essay on unions and politics. The invitation was later withdrawn, but not before I had discovered the *Otago Workman*, Arthur McCarthy's letterbooks, and the extensive archives of the Carpenters' Union. I am grateful to the then secretary, Dave Cunningham, for persuading a suspicious membership that I should not only be allowed to read them but to look after them (they distrusted libraries and academics).

In the mid-1970s, having become familiar with Caversham's streets on behalf of various political causes, I formed the idea of focusing a major research project on the area, with a view to analysing social and geographic mobility. I invited Dr Tom Brooking to collaborate. Unfortunately the first effort to create a machine-readable data base derived from *Stone's Directory* and the electoral rolls, which were then not held locally, aborted because of our excessive confidence in the abilities of short-term research assistants. This only became clear in 1986–87 when another research assistant, hired thanks to the now defunct Social Science Research Fund Committee, tried to complete the data base. As a result all people whose last names began with letters G through T inclusive were checked and re-entered. Since then the data base has been completed. In the meantime it had become necessary to adapt the data base to the capacities of the University of Otago's (then) new mainline system. The previous system could only cope with numeric data, so all information had to be coded; the newer system had enormous advantages, despite the cost in time to the Caversham project.

In 1986 the University sought and obtained a Fulbright Fellow who reviewed the project. Dr Jeremy Brecher, a distinguished labour and social historian, recommended that because of our workloads it made sense to work together on some projects and pursue our own interests on others. At that point nobody anticipated that this collection of essays, which he urged

me to work on, would appear before the collaborative work on social and geographical mobility. Dr Brooking and I taught a seminar from 1978 until 1983 on social history, based on Caversham, where I first tried to explore some of the themes in this book. That seminar proved very fruitful and I am grateful to him. Unfortunately other commitments prevented him from contributing chapters to this project (which, consequently, has become a more individual statement). I also owe a debt to Dr Brecher, not only for reviewing the project but for bringing his valuable knowledge of the labour process to Caversham. Within minutes of entering the Hillside workshops he noted not only the radical dissimilarity between Hillside and similar workshops in the United States but the centrality of the major themes in New Zealand historiography to the way in which the labour process at Hillside was organised. We have since published two papers on the labour process in the railway workshops. My own work on Hillside, in 1986, had focused on unionisation and politics, although I had begun writing the essay on the handicraft mode of production with Judi Boyd, the project's first fulltime research assistant. I am grateful to both of them for allowing me to develop those papers further.

Others have helped, including many students who participated in the Caversham seminar and my seminar on labour process in 1985. Their work is acknowledged in the footnotes. Other research assistants have also helped. Lucy Duncan, Lizzie Harrison, David Thomson, Sandy Bardsley, Stephen Clarke, Karen Duder and Tony Ballantyne have proved invaluable in various ways. David's skill in mastering the Vax and SPSSx still astonishes me. Alan McCord and Dick Martin have also provided an indispensable source of advice whenever the computer or SPSSx have presented problems.

I would also like to thank Dr Michael Bassett for assisting me to obtain copies of all the Dunedin Central electoral rolls for the period; the old Social Science Research Fund Committee; various Research Committees of the University of Otago; and Stephen Clarke and Craig Robertson for checking footnotes. David McDonald's indefatigable energy made the final hunt for elusive references bearable. John Sullivan, photographic librarian, undertook a search for relevant photographs in Wellingtons various libraries. I also count myself lucky to have had the capable assistance of Louise Cotterall in producing six maps at rather short notice. Then there are

those who read the manuscript in whole or part. Professor Ian Carter of the University of Auckland read the entire manuscript and made several useful suggestions; Professor Stuart Macintyre of the University of Melbourne read several of the chapters and drew to my attention interesting comparisons with Australia; and Dr Tom Brooking of my own University has also read the entire manuscript and made some useful suggestions. So too did Elizabeth Caffin of Auckland University Press. More importantly, she encouraged me to believe in this project at a time when I might easily have given up. Annabel Cooper, wife and critic, has helped by reading drafts and listening patiently whenever asked. She also contributed the title.

Perhaps my deepest debts are to the members of the Caversham Branch of the Labour Party during the 1970s, for it was here that I first began to make connections between the suburb in which I lived and the political processes which had transformed New Zealand. Through their families some members went back to World War I. Some of them would be amused to realise that in the course of this long journey I have finally realised the importance of work, beliefs and political action. The project has also brought me full circle. At school and university I have known and often been friends of the children and grandchildren of the men and women who constitute the actors in these essays. Doing the research has given me a reason for entering many of the buildings which I had known only from the outside. It has also given me the chance to meet and talk with many people who grew up and lived in Caversham. And last, but not least, as I grappled with the final chapter, I realised that three men who had been significant adults in my life many years ago had also shaped my path: Eric Meder, fitter and engineer; Gordon McLean, joiner and neighbour; and Mister Evans, who taught me most of what I know of carpentry. They all lived, like my family, in Anderson's Bay, but, as I now realise, Caversham, at the edge of, yet part of The Flat, had colonised many of the surrounding hills. To know what that has meant you will have to keep reading.

# *Introduction*

Between 1891 and 1900 the Liberal–Labour Government enacted a series of laws that made the colony famous as the world’s ‘social laboratory’. William Pember Reeves, the waspish young architect of much Lib–Lab labour legislation, coined the term ‘social laboratory’. He defined it skilfully in terms of pioneering, a series of legislative experiments. The story of those labour experiments is fairly well understood (although the legislation of the next period, 1900–12, important in consolidating and extending that revolution, is not well known).<sup>1</sup> This book aims to investigate the relationship between the organisation of work in the skilled trades, politics and society. One purpose is to explore the way in which the main themes of the ‘social laboratory’—equality, independence, security and opportunity—were achieved by working men and women in their work-places. Second, I want to explore the importance of the labour process in shaping the ‘social laboratory’ and the implications of this achievement for urban society, especially social class, and, more tentatively, New Zealand history. One of the central features of the ‘social laboratory’ was its success in resolving (or, some would have said, disguising) a major symptom of social class in Britain, industrial conflict, and removing another, poverty. When one investigates the world of skilled work, however, it becomes apparent that the political struggle also took place on the job. The main themes of the public world were equally important in the relatively obscure work-sites and factories of the country.

In large part this work had its origins in my research for *The Red Feds*.<sup>2</sup> That book focused largely on those defined as ‘unskilled’ and revealed the extent to which they wanted to achieve the same degree of control over their work that the skilled already possessed. Yet little was known about the skilled. As a rule unions of skilled men existed to impose apprenticeship regulations and exclude labourers from the trade; to establish acceptable ratios between the number of apprentices and labourers and the number of skilled workers; to control the work process (i.e. who worked various

machines, who did what, how quickly it was done etc.); to maintain wage relativities; to control the amount of overtime worked (the key to limiting short time and even unemployment); and to organise insurance and the payment of benefits. In many trades the skilled men did not need a union to protect their control over the job (although the unskilled did so almost invariably). Some have argued that only when mechanisation threatened these controls did skilled workers bother to form unions. Regardless, *The Red Feds* also revealed that the workplace and its relationships were central to the stratification of the working class and especially the distinction, inherited from Britain but common to all English-speaking societies, between skilled and unskilled or, as people then said, trades and labour. I also began to think that labour historians had devoted too much attention to union activists and industrial conflict in the belief that such a focus would best illuminate the nature of class and society.

While working on *The Red Feds* I was also involved in the Caversham project. This project originated from a debate about the role of social class in New Zealand's history. The sceptics claimed that social mobility had been so widespread that class had never had any role here.<sup>3</sup> The project was designed to analyse the relevance of class by systematically measuring the extent of social and geographical mobility in Caversham, an administrative area which contained a microcosm of the larger Dunedin community. The period 1902–22 was chosen because in these years unionisation gathered pace, the Liberal Party lost much of its urban working-class base, and, after a long and contentious process, the New Zealand Labour Party emerged and won the loyalty of most urban workers.<sup>4</sup> I hoped that an intensive study of an area such as Caversham would illuminate further these larger processes and the relationship between social and political change (although it soon proved necessary to look not just at Caversham but the larger political system of its neighbouring areas and to go back before 1890).

In unexpected ways this hope has been fulfilled; unexpected because the assumed links between new technologies, larger factories, class formation, and the growth of socialism dissolved. In the process of devising an appropriate occupational structure and coding for analysis everybody listed in *Stone's Directory for Otago and Southland*, an annual listing, complexities emerged. In almost all skilled trades—saddler, sail-maker,

butcher—the noun itself did not explain whether the person employed workers, worked on their own account, or sold their labour.<sup>5</sup> It took some time to realise that the *Directory*, unlike the electoral rolls, provided the answer to the problem by listing those who sold their labour and skills as ‘jymn’, or journeymen. By consulting the ‘Trades Directory’ it also became possible to separate workers from the self-employed and small masters in trades where the old usage of journeyman had fallen into disuse. Study of *Stone’s Directory* also revealed the existence of many small trades, most of them ununionised. The men in those trades organised their work along handicraft lines and produced for a small local market. Even in larger industries, however, work continued to be organised along handicraft lines.<sup>6</sup>

Skilled journeymen and masters dominated Caversham. That dominance affected the class structure, the social pattern, and the way in which people thought about them. The skilled—a term which includes both masters and journeymen for most of the period—played a decisive role in shaping Caversham to meet their expectations by preserving key aspects of a pre-industrial social structure. They also helped determine the terms on which industry, that product of the first industrial revolution, existed and developed.<sup>7</sup> Because of the vitality of the sub-culture of skill, and the developing consciousness of their own interests, they also played a decisive role in shaping the nature of urban Liberalism and, later, Labour, both in Dunedin and New Zealand. By analysing work and social relations on the job I hope to demonstrate their impact on this country’s unique system of industrial relations, show why and with what effects they turned to politics to help retain what they had achieved, and explore the way in which they modified the very idea of social class.

Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to discuss three key concepts: labour process, skill, and social class, and to sketch the theoretical and historiographical context for this study. The reasons for this are simple enough: to understand the issues and questions which have guided the research; to set the framework within which the dialogue between evidence and theory takes place; and to afford a larger context for this intensive local study and so guard against the dangers of parochialism. Because discussions of labour history and social structure in New Zealand have been profoundly shaped by British debates—in part because of the assumption

that our history has paralleled theirs—more attention has been given to British historiography than to American or Australian. Anyone with an aversion to discussions of theory should skip to the final section of this chapter.

## I

Because much of the argument in this book focuses on the organisation of work and the labour process it is necessary to say a few words about that subject. Over the past twenty years, scholars in several disciplines have concentrated their attention on the labour process. There are a number of reasons for this. First, influenced by the desire of social historians to understand the lives of ordinary people, labour historians began turning from the study of unions and left-wing parties to look at the rank and file, women, and minorities. At roughly the same time scholars in several fields recognised that the history of work itself—long neglected—not only provided an insight into the development of capitalism but ‘a useful point of entry to study power and authority relations within the working class—as a way of approaching the relationship between agency and structure ... [and] to capture at an intimate level one of the most important social relationships in society—that between worker and employer ...’.<sup>8</sup>

In some industries the meaning of work became contentious between the 1890s and the 1910s.<sup>9</sup> Did the work paid for by employers include travelling time, preparatory tasks (such as feeding horses or getting up steam), and cleaning-up? Led by the miners, the colony’s workers began insisting that such tasks were extra to the work they were being paid for, and demanding compensatory payment.<sup>10</sup> The idea spread. Men demanded payment for working in wet, dirty or even cold conditions. The issue of overtime became more contentious, and men began to debate how many hours constituted a working week. The very idea of payment by time, instead of payment by results, became popular with workers. In the same years, ‘scientific management’ became popular among some employers, especially in the United States, and focused attention on the first industrial revolution’s answers to such questions as: who did what? how should it be done? how long should it take? who should decide what skills and tools

were needed? who should decide how many helpers and apprentices should be hired? These questions in turn raised others—about theft, pilfering, working for oneself in the employer's time—some of which impinged on the delicate issue of who owned the job (for most skilled workers believed that seniority gave them more and more equity in the job).<sup>11</sup>

Scholars have identified three different systems which employers and workers have accepted historically for answering the questions posed in the previous paragraph. The first existed in small firms and involved simple forms of control. The employer/capitalist had been trained in the relevant craft, knew everything, and decided everything. He (and occasionally she) supervised the work directly and made all decisions about hiring and firing. S/he might also undertake the training of any apprentices. With the growth of larger firms and factories direct control became more difficult and management tended to be separated from the actual work of production. The employer then tried to establish a hierarchical system of line management, modelled on the army. S/he chose people with the relevant skills for each position of authority. Under the 'old factory system' of the first industrial revolution this method was pervasive, and in industries which came into existence then, such as the railways, elaborate bureaucratic decision-making systems were established. Although employers or managers decided what was to be done, and what technologies were appropriate, the skilled workers enjoyed considerable autonomy in deciding how each job was done and how long it took. The third system, heralded as 'scientific management' and widely considered a product of the second industrial revolution (1890–1910), tried to transfer knowledge of the production process and control over the organisation of work from the shop floor to management. In the process, skill was, to use the expressive English term, 'diluted'. Indeed, employers hoped for this outcome, because it lowered labour costs and allowed higher productivity.<sup>12</sup>

Like most taxonomies of capitalist development, this one is schematic and teleological, subtly shaped by various forms of materialist determinism.<sup>13</sup> It also tends to order different forms of the labour process into an evolutionary sequence of historical stages, and posit that the form characteristic of mass-production industry is becoming more and more dominant (an assumption not unrelated to the older view that the factory

increasingly displaced handicrafts and steam displaced hand power).<sup>14</sup> The theory also tended to assume that capitalism, as it developed, automatically generated certain forms of labour process, regardless of political and cultural context (for instance that mechanisation resulted in de-skilling, de-skilling meant lower wages and worse conditions, the final result being the homogenisation of labour). In short, the taxonomy posited the evolution of a determinative structure and called into question the ability of people to shape their own history, their agency.

Despite the tendency—common in new areas of study—for theory to race ahead in an empirical vacuum, the work on labour process has helped to clarify certain conceptual issues. The relative importance of structure and agency, for instance, came into sharper focus, although historians soon divided into two loose groupings: those who portrayed labour on the shop floor as inherently oppositional, resistant to the prerogatives of capital at the point of production; and others who concluded that labour remained vulnerable and subordinate. A consensus emerged, if only briefly, that while

conflicts over job control were an important influence on the nature of production relations, exactly how to assess their meaning remained problematic. It could be argued that these conflicts possessed limited scope, were apolitical, did not contradict the ‘real subordination’ to capitalist domination and, finally, did not signify a uniquely militant property of the rank and file.<sup>15</sup>

The influence of Marxist teleology is clear from the consensus, and scholars, finding themselves in an intellectual *cul de sac*, busied themselves with yet another key to inequality, labour-market segmentation. Here too, it soon transpired, what promised at first to explain everything was soon so hedged with qualifications and complexities that nothing could be explained.<sup>16</sup>

Part of the problem was, simply, the unstated ideological criteria for establishing agency. For if the only proof of agency had to be the growth of revolutionary class consciousness or the overthrow of capitalism, then workers never enjoyed agency outside a handful of exceptional contexts. Besides, as several scholars in diverse fields began to argue, to define structure and agency as mutually exclusive logical categories distorts reality, for structure is always the medium of agency and agency of structure.<sup>17</sup> As Marshall Sahlins put it, coming at the problem from a different angle and starting with an observation by Clifford Geertz:

an event is a unique actualization of a general phenomenon, a contingent realization of the cultural pattern .... On the other hand, then, as the contingent circumstances of action need not conform to the significance some group might assign them, people are known to creatively reconsider their conventional schemes. And to that extent, the culture is historically altered in action. We can speak even of 'structural transformation', since the alteration of some meanings changes the positional relations among the cultural categories ....<sup>18</sup>

The polarity of structure/history, like that of structure/agency, is overridden. Not for the first time, reconceptualisation marks the path forward.

Not only does the structure/agency polarity have no philosophical standing, but the problematic political assumptions which bedevil the study of labour process have recently received skilful analysis by William Lazonick (in his ambitious comparative analysis of the labour process in three societies).<sup>19</sup> Lazonick was interested in the links between forms of labour process and economic performance, a question which will not detain us, but his comparative method demonstrated the inadequacy of explaining change in terms of any single variable and the importance of political and cultural contexts.<sup>20</sup> As Lazonick remarked, 'The economic effectiveness of the factory as a mode of work organization did not occur within a social vacuum but depended on the historical evolution of conditions that determined the relative power of capitalists and workers to structure the relation between effort and pay.'<sup>21</sup> The values, traditions and hopes of those involved all play a part. In Britain, Lazonick concluded, skilled manual workers controlled the co-ordination of work, the division of labour, and the training of young recruits.<sup>22</sup> In Caversham, and in New Zealand generally, British immigrants arrived with a set of answers to the questions posed by the labour process, answers which shaped the central characteristics of society and the 'social laboratory'.

If analysis of the labour process resurrected old debates about the nature of capitalism and its future—debates which began with the first industrial revolution—then the post-modern moment allows us to see more clearly the central assumptions which shaped those debates and the discipline of history. First, it is no longer clear that productive processes determine the social relations of production or that economic change is in some sense primary. Not even structure, conceived independently of human will and desire, determines history. Marx realised this (although he later tended to forget the point) when he wrote: 'Men make their own history, but they do

not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past.’<sup>23</sup> If workers can be active agents in controlling the organisation of work, then they can modify authority structures, the meaning of class, and even the way in which class operates. Unless one adopts an ‘essentialist’ definition of class, a position which attracts many, then the definition itself becomes problematic when the subordinate and exploited can effectively challenge and dispute power. A similar issue has emerged in various other areas of inquiry. For instance, much recent evidence suggests that slaves profoundly influenced and even controlled their owners. Australian historians have also shown the remarkable extent to which convicts influenced and controlled the terms on which their labour was expropriated.<sup>24</sup> Labour historians, too often ignorant of any development outside their own almost hermetically sealed specialty, have recently tended to view with pessimism the possibility of workers influencing, let alone controlling, the organisation of work. This book, then, investigates the labour process and the issue of structure and agency.

## II

Although the concept of skill and the skilled has long been a staple of sociological and historical analysis, surprisingly little empirical research has been done on either topic. In British scholarly discourse the skilled have often been equated with an ‘aristocracy of labour’. F. W. Engels first used that concept in the 1880s to explain why the British proletariat was not being immiserated and the social structure, far from being polarised, had become more ‘graduated and differentiated both in respect of incomes and business activities’.<sup>25</sup> Lenin then incorporated the concept of an ‘aristocracy of labour’ into his theory of capitalist imperialism, arguing that the ‘aristocrats of labour’ betrayed their proletarian destiny to sup off the fruits of Empire.<sup>26</sup> Marxists continued to use the concept in a mechanistic way until Eric Hobsbawm elaborated an empirical definition, describing these aristocrats as an ‘upper strata of the working class, better paid, better treated and generally regarded as more respectable and politically moderate than the rest of the proletariat’.<sup>27</sup> Hobsbawm recognised a multiplicity of

criteria: 'level and regularity of earnings', 'prospects of social security', 'conditions of work', prospects for children etc. Despite the complexity of his model he relied mainly on wage rates to prove his case that an 'aristocracy' existed. Not all scholars agreed with Hobsbawm's definition, let alone his argument that the skilled had been co-opted by the bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth century, thus preventing the English working class from realising its revolutionary destiny.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the popularity of Hobsbawm's sketch—for he adduced little evidence—Marxists more recently have agreed that the concept has always been 'ambiguous, promiscuous, and vague'. Only in so far as the skilled were sub-contractors could they even be considered a distinct class, yet subcontracting had become relatively rare in Britain by 1900 when the concept of an 'aristocracy' was being required to bear its heaviest explanatory freight. In fact, as some Marxists realised (the Webbs pointed it out at the time), by 1900, in Britain at least, strategic location had replaced skill as the key to bargaining position.<sup>29</sup> The debate about the existence of the 'aristocracy of labour' has moved back in time to the 1850s, but the quest for a definition of the 'labour aristocracy' continues to raise interesting questions. J. Foster, who argued that the 'aristocracy of labour' played a strategic role in defusing revolutionary sentiment in the 1850s, defined its position in terms of authority at work, by which he meant control over other workers rather than power to conceive and plan work.<sup>30</sup> Other Marxist scholars have disagreed with Foster and, more recently, while agreeing that high wages and skill constitute a necessary but not sufficient precondition for the existence of an 'aristocracy', historians have stressed the cultural mechanisms that kept skilled workers apart from the rest of the working class. Among such mechanisms have been a high rate of endogamy, distinctive leisure pursuits, and distinctive beliefs (especially artisan radicalism, faith in unions, and a commitment to friendly societies).<sup>31</sup> It should be noted, however, that nobody now believes that an 'aristocracy' existed in Britain after 1850 and not all agree that it has much utility in the post-Chartist period. As Patrick Joyce said, 'the labour aristocrat so beloved of recent social history was rather more a rhetorical than an economic construct'.<sup>32</sup>

With the exception of one sociologist, nobody has suggested that an

‘aristocracy of labour’ existed in New Zealand.<sup>33</sup> As in many colonies, shortages of labour greatly reduced differentials for skill in the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> True, wage rates determined only part of the income which established the family’s levels of affluence, but the relative parity of skilled-unskilled wage rates suggests that the concept of an ‘aristocracy of labour’ had little relevance here (whatever its relevance in Britain). Nor is there much evidence of subcontracting in urban New Zealand. Despite this nil return, as it were, this theoretical *cul de sac* has left a legacy of prejudices, such as the belief that skilled workers tend to be less militant or radical than unskilled workers. Yet in other historiographies, notably French and American, the skilled have been portrayed as ‘militant craftsmen’ rather than quiescent ‘aristocrats’.<sup>35</sup>

Although labour historians have moved from the study of institutions and organisations to look at the organisation of labour markets and work, they have paid little attention to the role of the skilled or the meaning of skill. Manual dexterity and knowledge are usually thought of as constituting skill but, in that sense, most workers have some skill. Some scholars have even argued that skill does not exist but is merely a social construction designed to enhance the privileges of those who define themselves as skilled, by restricting entry to certain occupations. Roger Penn, in a sophisticated version of this thesis, has recognised that the objective difficulty of work may be the basis for skill but remarks that this is not necessarily so, as unskilled work may be as difficult to perform or learn. As a result he concluded that ‘The central feature of skilled manual work is some form of social exclusion’.<sup>36</sup> It is difficult to disagree with Charles More’s conclusion, however, that it would be impossible to maintain socially constructed skill for all craftsmen in a large industry over a long time. If one group did so it would be at the expense of other groups.<sup>37</sup> Economists, by comparison, usually point to the ‘discretion content’ of skilled work as its distinguishing characteristic, especially the power to plan and execute work. More generally, however, skill is defined as any combination of ‘mental and physical qualities which is useful to industry and require[s] considerable training to acquire’.<sup>38</sup> There is little need to insist on one definition as against the other. They can be held together as possibilities.

During the late nineteenth century discussions of skill became involved in debates about the evolutionary direction in which capitalism was developing. Marx himself, after studying the textile industry, concluded that capitalism was progressively de-skilling work and reducing skilled labour to unskilled labour. Although it is now widely recognised that the textile industry was atypical, this diagnosis, not unrelated to the rise of 'left' Liberalism and socialism, won growing support in the late nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> By 1900 most commentators in Britain believed that skill had been destroyed and that apprenticeship had become a thing of the past. Many skilled men in New Zealand came to the same conclusion. Not for the first time, colonists discussed developments in Britain as if they were going on in New Zealand, whereas the purpose of such discussion was to ensure that they did not happen here.<sup>40</sup>

Recent scholarship indicates that in many smaller trades and crafts the 'decline of apprenticeship [in Britain] was probably slower and perhaps less harrowing' than was once believed. 'In some cases ... the decline itself was illusory.' One reason for the confusion, as Charles More suggests, is that simple written or verbal contracts replaced indentured apprenticeships, while it became rare for apprentices to live in the master's house.<sup>41</sup> The crafts most affected by de-skilling, he concluded, 'did not really involve very much skill' and, as a rule, the least skilled aspects of skilled work lent themselves most readily to mechanisation.<sup>42</sup> The decline of the traditional craft apprenticeship occurred, but not so much because of de-skilling as because those industries declined in importance. In new industries, such as engineering, a 'new-style' apprenticeship emerged in which journeymen did the teaching, no indentures were signed, and the lads were left to find their own lodgings.<sup>43</sup> The same trends operated in New Zealand, but operated even more slowly and unevenly. There can be no doubt, however, that the development of new technologies created the opportunity for unskilled or semi-skilled workers, who followed skilled workers into the factories during the first industrial revolution, to undertake tasks which skilled men had once done. As Lazonick points out, whether de-skilling occurs is an empirical issue: managers could introduce new technology to reduce their dependence on shop-floor skills; they could restructure the division of

labour in ways that integrated personnel with key skills into management; or they could leave their skilled workers to decide how the new technology should be used.<sup>44</sup> In any case, unskilled and semi-skilled workers may see new technologies as an opportunity to break into what had previously been a skilled trade.

Men learned semi-skilled work by picking-up, following-up, holding-up or helping, either as members of a gang or as mates of skilled men.<sup>45</sup> They often mastered many of the tasks of the skilled artisan and could try passing themselves off as skilled. Some skilled trades were also learnt in this way. In late-nineteenth-century Britain plumbers, painters and bricklayers learnt their trades as skilled men's mates without serving formal apprenticeships. Engine-drivers also, whether on stationary or moving engines, learnt on the job without serving apprenticeships. So did the highly skilled bridge carpenters. It might be thought that this is clear proof that 'skill' is socially constructed, but wage rates fail to confirm the point, for skilled trades commanded comparable wages regardless of how skill had been acquired.

### III

Although these essays are not focused on the meaning of social class, it is necessary to say something briefly about that complex matter because the last three chapters will explore the way in which the organisation of work related both to politics and society. Historians (and the mythical general reader) have often retreated from any attempt to understand social structure because it seems inevitably to embroil them in complex theoretical issues which confuse more than they clarify. I am not without sympathy for this viewpoint. Without a theoretical perspective, however, the evidence has the impossible task of speaking for itself. In another sense, the attempt to ignore theory simply means to ignore what others have thought about social structure. That has always seemed to me silly. This does not mean that New Zealand's social structure is identical to or even similar to that of any other country; one purpose of this book is to measure with some precision the ways in which the social relations of capitalism were distinctive here. Yet the notion of distinctiveness implies a comparison with somewhere else. Comparative analysis is hard enough without trying to conduct it in two

distinct languages. Hence in this study I use the vocabulary and concepts of social analysis that have been fashioned over the past 150 years, mainly in Europe and North America. The origin of New Zealand's European population makes this strategy still more sensible because that vocabulary and conceptual framework armed the immigrants and their children with the ability to define what they hoped to leave behind and what they hoped to create. They used that inherited vocabulary and conceptual framework to construct the meaning of their work and their lives and in the process meanings changed.<sup>46</sup> Because scholars also use the same terms, creating a double hermeneutic, clarity is imperative.

Two words are central to the following analysis; stratification and class. Stratification refers to the inequality in the distribution of rewards for work and in life chances that flow from that. In industrial societies, whether capitalist or socialist, the occupational structure provides the key to the system of stratification which distributes rewards. Even in societies as different as the old Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States a marked convergence existed between specific occupations and their relative rewards. The status assigned to each occupation has also become remarkably similar across a wide range of disparate societies. As one might imagine, however, there are as many strata in a society as income or status variations, so that most sociologists and social historians have located clusters of strata which they usually refer to as classes. Class, in this sense, structures rewards, status, life-styles, and opportunities. People who earn about the same income, enjoy roughly similar status, possess similar life-styles, and command comparable opportunities can be described as belonging to the same class. In industrial societies the four variables correlate quite closely.

There are three traditions of class-identification studies which seek to explain the stratification system of capitalist societies and the way in which strata cohere into social class. One, largely derived from Karl Marx's work, claims that the relations of production determine social structure and that a person's class position is determined by his or her relationship to the means of production; some owned the means of production and others had to sell their labour. With the development of industrial capitalism, Marx believed, the class structure would become progressively simplified until only

bourgeoisie and proletariat existed. Class conflict, intrinsic to developing capitalism (because of the labour theory of value), would progressively transform the proletariat from a class in itself into a class for itself (i.e. conscious of its single interest and its historic destiny). Although in his own analyses of contemporary European developments Marx distinguished class as an economic phenomenon from class as a social or political expression, he assumed a simple causal relationship between the three levels.<sup>47</sup> The Marxist-materialist view, in brief, holds that capitalism is a distinctive mode of production and exchange; that class-in-itself is generated by the mode of production and is central not only to the social organisation of capitalist societies but is the major source of social change; and that increasing poverty and conflict will transform class in itself (or stratification) into class for itself. Oddly, however, Marxists and materialists generally have tended to explain the failure of working people to identify with the working class in terms of a 'false consciousness' rooted in ideology and culture.<sup>48</sup> Despite this, the definition of class in terms of relationships to the means of production has a certain heuristic value as a framework which does not determine but which does structure social relations.<sup>49</sup>

The second tradition of class analysis, influenced most by Max Weber, defines class in terms of market positions which structure rewards, status, and lifestyles (although social scientists have given the insight little attention, he pointed out that the credit and commodity markets were just as important within capitalism as the labour market).<sup>50</sup> Weber accepted the fact that capitalism generated its own distinctive labour markets, but rejected Marx's teleology and remarked that the level of inter-and intra-generational mobility would measure and determine the likelihood that class in itself would become a class for itself.<sup>51</sup> This passing comment—almost as tantalising as Marx's three pages on class in *Capital*—has shaped empirical studies of social mobility and the development of neo-Weberian theory.<sup>52</sup> At the turn of the century the great socialist revisionist, Eduard Bernstein, elaborated further, pointing out that far from simplifying the social structure, the development of industrial capitalism had spawned yet another new social class (white collar), spread property more widely, and aided the growth of small-scale enterprises. Bernstein believed class central

to capitalist society and the possibility of its transformation, but rejected Marxist millenarianism.<sup>53</sup>

The Weberian tradition has been developed most fully in recent times by Frank Parkin and Anthony Giddens. They accept that class is an economic phenomenon which structures social organisation in capitalist societies and generates social change, but they also attempt to analyse the processes of structuration and closure.<sup>54</sup> The neo-Weberians reject the Marxist thesis that capitalism will progressively simplify the class structure by de-skilling all labour and homogenising it in a state of splendid, if revolutionary, misery. Instead, like Weber, in theorising about class structure they emphasise the differentiation of labour and the limitations of the capitalist/worker dichotomy. The distinction between ‘blue collar’ and ‘white collar’, a distinction which became of some importance in New Zealand during this period, derives from this tradition.<sup>55</sup> In short, they hold, it is more appropriate to inquire empirically about the extent to which class as an economic phenomenon translates into political action, ‘collective solidarity’, and ‘class consciousness’ than to introduce them into the definition of class in the first instance. Other scholars working within this tradition have argued that only when class translates into political action is it sensible to talk of class for itself.<sup>56</sup> The obvious implication of this is, of course, that the social structuration of class need be neither synonymous nor isomorphic with economic structuration. In other words, neo-Weberians like Giddens refuse to conceptualise class structure in terms of class positions, which allows mobility to be ignored, but see it as aggregates of individuals which will be more or less identifiable depending on the degree of ‘structuration’. In advanced societies, Giddens argues, ‘the most generalised process of structuration ... result[s] from the “the distribution of mobility chances ...”’. That distribution, however, affects not only the development of class consciousness—class-for-itself—but the existence of class as an identifiable social phenomena. Like the Marxists, however, neo-Weberians see class as an integral aspect of capitalism, a major source of socio-political change, and treat occupation as the key determinant of any individual’s class position.<sup>57</sup>

As Parkin realised, the sociological tradition of class analysis has been bedevilled by ‘paired, logically exhaustive categories—propertied and

propertyless, superordinate and subordinate, manual and non-manual—dichotomies that seek to reveal the fundamental line of cleavage ... in the stratification order’.<sup>58</sup> He acknowledged the inadequacies of existing theory in dealing with divisions within classes, the middle classes generally, not to mention gender, ethnicity, religion and race. Each of these, even in industrial societies, may rival or eclipse class as principles of social organisation and each complicates class whether seen as a structural characteristic of a society or a source of collective action. Parkin then portrayed class as one (but only one) ‘process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to rewards and opportunities’, while others, outsiders, either accept or challenge the position of the privileged. Although Parkin tried to incorporate the idea of change within his theory he was not especially successful. Sociological theorising, while stimulating and revealing, had reached a *cul de sac*, in large part because ‘the investigation of long-term social processes’ had been abandoned in favour of a static conception of ‘social states’.<sup>59</sup>

The third tradition of class analysis in modern sociology was developed by the structural-functionalists (many of them deeply influenced by Weber). Where the Marxists increasingly asked why the prophesied revolution had not occurred, the structural-functionalists approached the same issue from the opposite direction and asked what held society together, despite great inequalities. They concluded that a consensus about values produced social cohesion. Despite (or because of) the inherent ambiguity in the concept of consensus, the structural-functionalists developed an elaborate set of propositions about value systems and anchored their work in the evaluations made by individuals. ‘There is ...’, as Talcott Parsons said, ‘an actual system of ranking in terms of moral evaluation ... [which] implies in some sense an integrated set of standards ....’<sup>60</sup> This insight generated a study of the relative prestige accorded to ninety occupations by a random sample of Americans and the results confirmed the existence of a common value system. Parallel studies in other countries seemed to confirm a remarkable congruence in societies as diverse as New Zealand, Japan and the old Soviet Union.<sup>61</sup> The conflict theorists, who reacted against the vagueness of consensus, also stressed the subjective perceptions of class as central to the concept’s definition. A considerable amount of interesting

empirical work has been done both by the structural-functionalists and their critics, but it bears on perceptions. Although Parsons's central insight has considerable heuristic value it is impossible for the historian to replicate the sophisticated attitude surveys which the structural-functionalists used. For all that there is value in the observation that while industrial capitalism structures stratification, the significance of stratification, including its translation into class, depends on the meanings given by the actual people in the society.

#### IV

Throughout this work I draw on the three traditions of class analysis specified above, each of which has its own strengths. In general, however, productive relations, market relations and subjective evaluations are conceived as dialectically interrelated frameworks which structure, but do not determine. The precise relationship between them is a matter for empirical investigation and it seems likely, as W. G. Runciman has argued, that several types of class system have existed over the past 150 years in different capitalist societies.<sup>62</sup> How to explain these variations has only recently become the subject of scholarly inquiry and this book is concerned with identifying the distinctive New Zealand variation. These interrelated frameworks provide a useful starting point but must be forced to interrogate each other in the light of the evidence and to accommodate their own historicity.

The three sociological definitions of class as structure ignored the cultural and historical nature of class. 'Class', as E. P. Thompson wrote, 'is defined by men as they live their own history, and in the end, this is the only definition.'<sup>63</sup> This said, however, Thompson stressed that 'class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born—or enter involuntarily'. To some extent shared experiences were immanent in productive relations, although the articulation of that experience varied with culture, time and place. Thompson captured the nature of nineteenth-century working-class experience in England by being faithful to its language, even as he endorsed and reproduced a particular concept of class. By insisting that class could be understood only in specific

historical contexts, no less than by stressing the role of ordinary people in generating change, Thompson also did much to free the study of class from the rather general and schematic analytical systems of the sociologists. Yet the absences from his ‘biography of the English working class’ also point to significant problems: non-English workers are absent, even when they lived in England, and the entire issue of racial consciousness is marginalised.<sup>64</sup>

Thompson also marginalised women. ‘Work, in the sense of productive activity, determined class consciousness, whose politics were rationalist; domesticity was outside production, and it compromised or subverted class consciousness often in alliance with (religious) movements whose mode was “expressive”. The antitheses were clearly coded masculine and feminine; class, in other words, was a gendered construction.’ As Joan Scott points out, by presuming to depict a social reality, Thompson obscured his role in constructing and perpetuating a particular definition of class in terms of essential characteristics.<sup>65</sup> While Scott has clearly detected an absence—I am not persuaded that class is only ‘a gendered construction’—it should be said that the three sociological traditions not only marginalised women, but treated them as invisible. By and large, until recent times, it was assumed that women derived their class position from fathers and husbands. Sociologists now debate the relative importance of the wife’s job and her husband’s job in determining her class position, but in Caversham, of course, hardly any married women sold their labour for money.<sup>66</sup> We will return to the problem in Chapter 4.

Whatever the merit of Scott’s criticisms, Thompson helped to free the study of class from its deterministic and materialistic nexus and assert the importance of human agency. He also elaborated a cultural definition of class which others, notably Gareth Stedman Jones, explored further.<sup>67</sup> Yet the idea that an English working-class culture existed—even with London’s Jews, the Irish, Welsh and Scots excluded—has come to seem implausible, at least for the nineteenth century. Moreover, the word ‘class’ has itself become problematic, being analysed as a historical creation which achieves its meanings from a historically created discourse itself embedded in the very changes it seeks to define. I started this book assuming that the socio-economic backgrounds, interests and structural positions of Caversham’s workers would explain their behaviour no less than their thought; during the

research and writing, however, the post-modernist revolution has occurred. Class is not something which predetermines consciousness; rather, as Gareth Stedman Jones wrote, it is ‘constructed and inscribed within a complex rhetoric of metaphorical associations, causal inferences and imaginative constructions’.<sup>68</sup> To put it in other words, language, defined broadly as a symbolic system, is prior to reality and experience. Both can be constructed only through language.

Jones’s first attempt to work out the implications of post-modernism began with a radical statement of the independence of language. In his influential chapter on ‘Re-thinking Chartism’—and many of Caversham’s first immigrants were self-conscious heirs to Chartism—he repudiated the long tradition of sociological analysis, which treated class as an ontological reality, and tried to assert the centrality of Chartist politics by applying a ‘non-referential conception of language to the study of Chartist speeches and writings’.<sup>69</sup> Joan Scott has argued that his approach is flawed in two ways. ‘First, he defines “language” literally, with no sense of how texts are constructed. Second, he slips back into the notion that “language” reflected a reality external to it, rather than being constitutive of that reality.’<sup>70</sup> In short, he starts on a post-modernist adventure but ends with a conventional intellectual history, failing to see that ‘class’ might have been part of the political identity created. In other words he treats language solely as a means of communicating ideas ‘rather than as a system of meaning or a process of signification’.<sup>71</sup> According to Scott the key to the difference is simply that in the former case words are treated as unambiguous and fixed, in the second they are recognised as multidimensional, their meaning established relationally, constituted through differentiation. Whether one fully agrees with Scott that ‘the “languages of class” of the nineteenth century ... are built with, in terms of, sexual difference’, we can nonetheless see that the definition of class, like control of the labour process, entailed exclusion as well as inclusion, and that the processes of differentiation central to the construction of meaning involved one of the central problems which class theory and labour history have traditionally ignored.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that language in either sense was non-referential and had nothing to do with the world. Scott, no less

than Jones, runs the risk of substituting linguistic for sociological determinism. Either approach makes it difficult to deal with the labour process, let alone politics. Changes in behaviour, how and why particular vocabularies become contested, let alone historical change in general, are likely to be rendered as signs of the prefigurative potency of language, and especially political language. '[I]t was not consciousness (or ideology) that produced politics,' as Jones said, 'but politics that produced consciousness.'<sup>72</sup> Such a statement comes as a breath of fresh air in a discipline which has tended to assume that consciousness and politics reflect underlying economic realities, but a provocative insight is not a methodology and the insinuation that language has no reference to the real world contradicts common sense.<sup>73</sup> Patrick Joyce has most usefully attempted to elaborate Jones's post-modern method (although only as one strategy in an eclectic mix). After studying England's industrial north (which Marx thought prefigured capitalism's future), Joyce concluded that class was only one of several sources of social identity in the period 1840–1914 and less important than 'ideas and associations taken from politics, and in particular the populist traditions of popular radicalism'. Joyce recognised that his use of the word 'populist' is open to criticism, for nobody in Britain then used it, but persisted anyway because of the central importance which nineteenth-century English working men attached to 'the people' and the importance of radical politics as a source of identity.<sup>74</sup>

As Mayfield and Thorne point out, English social historians such as Stedman Jones and Joyce have been struggling to disentangle the study of class and labour history in nineteenth-century England from the teleological assumptions of the Marxist heritage; industrial society did not automatically generate a working class and nor was socialism the only true political expression of working-class experience. They have not, despite some rhetorical flourishes, methodically worked out the implications of deconstruction and post-modernism for social history but are in danger of substituting linguistic for social determinism and reinstating, by failing to confront, the old teleological association of class and socialism.<sup>75</sup>

The link between social being and social consciousness, like the link between sign and meaning, is always to some degree a matter of human convention. The 'very articulation of agency to language ... renders human

existence historically conditioned and mediated'. 'The instant language is creatively deployed, it generates the problem of historical time by virtue of the "inevitable pastness of any trope, the inevitable reliance of any sign of a referent which is prior to it".'<sup>76</sup> One might add, however, that although such conventions are historically formed, and inherited from the past, they are subjected to 'practical revaluations' whenever used. Convention or tradition entails no suspension of human creativity. According to Marshall Sahlins, 'Every reproduction of culture is an alteration, insofar as in action, the categories by which a ... world is orchestrated pick up some novel empirical content.' He refers to this as 'the functional revaluation of signs', for each sign—and each has an interrelated symbolic, conceptual and instrumental value—is subject to 'the processes of human consciousness and intelligence'.<sup>77</sup> The immigrants to Caversham, as to New Zealand, not only transplanted British institutions, a process which involved them in creating definitions of Britishness, but set out to re-order work and society. Their inherited languages of class and politics were put to new uses in a new society and to some extent under circumstances chosen by themselves.

Before leaving this introduction to theoretical issues, one further point should be noted. Marxists, sociologists and social historians generally have conducted their analyses of class structure and stratification within industrial society. What is meant by that term is not always clear and different disciplines tend to have different definitions. To compound the problem, historians investigating social structure in the nineteenth century have coined another term, equally unclear in some respects, in order to differentiate industrial society from its predecessor, pre-industrial society. The very concepts themselves imply a schematic and linear relationship (i.e. industrial society evolves/develops out of pre-industrial society). Sometimes, confusingly, the terms modern and pre-modern are used to convey roughly the same meaning. Economists define industrial society in terms of living standards and levels of technology; sociologists and social historians in terms of the organisation of capital and the labour market. In industrial society capital is concentrated, ownership and management are differentiated, and occupational specialisation is highly specific. So too is status. In pre-industrial society small-scale enterprises dominate, status is generalised, transience high and capital diffuse. Class structure, complex in

industrial societies, is likely to be still more complex, although the gap between rich and poor may well be considerably greater than it is in industrial societies with interventionist states. The theoretical bases for the distinction have not been elaborated to any great degree but it is an important distinction for this study and introduces an important further complexity into our discussion of class and stratification. Caversham was, in some respects, a pre-industrial society, and the coexistence of different modes of production did much to make it distinctive.<sup>78</sup>

The two terms have also been used to define different ways of doing work. Domestic production is dominant in pre-industrial society (i.e. the work is done in the home) and factory production in industrial society. As one might expect, given the clear distinction, in the past fifteen years much attention has been paid to the transition from pre-industrial to industrial. Two theories have dominated discussion. The first is a variant of Marx's theory of primitive accumulation and the second, proto-industrialisation, stresses the rural and domestic origins of industrialisation. Neither theory need detain us, but the debate has revealed complexities in the process of industrialisation which are relevant. For instance, factories existed before the industrial revolution and hand-driven tools remained important, especially in the engineering trades, throughout the nineteenth century. In some areas of Britain and Europe the supposedly pre-industrial systems of putting-out, a form of subcontracting, and artisan production, small scale and controlled by independent artisans, did not disappear with industrialisation. Not only did they remain important, but innovative and profitable.<sup>79</sup> In Caversham, as we shall see, artisan production triumphed.

This said, however, labour historians have tended to use the term pre-industrial as a synonym for culture, while treating the industrial revolution as a set of structural changes. As Maxine Berg has said, 'The impact of custom and community on the workplace was not ... a casualty of industrialization; rather it took on other forms. Appeals ... to pre-industrial values, nonmarket behaviour, family subsistence economy ... are all inadequate.'<sup>80</sup> The world of the industrial revolution was more complex. Even the terms used for analysis were subject to change. When the first immigrants settled in Caversham the concept of artisanship remained central to the organisation of the labour process. As a consequence, politics

and society in this New World took on distinctive forms.

## V

In this study occupation provides the key to the labour process, the stratification system, and class. Occupation was chosen—as it always is in studies of social structure—because the information is easily available for all adult males and because in all known societies it correlates closely with rewards, life-styles and life chances. Contemporaries also used it extensively.

After sifting through over 1,000 occupational labels used to describe the work done by the adults in Caversham between 1902 and 1922 it became clear that the occupational categories used to investigate the social structure of ‘modern industrial societies’ would have to be adapted. In Caversham pre-industrial and industrial coexisted. The resultant complexities made it inappropriate to employ the six categories used by North American historians, so five more were added, although they can be reduced back to six for comparative purposes: (1) larger employers, (2) professionals and higher managerial, (3) semi-professionals, (4) officials (caretakers and foremen for instance), (5) self-employed and those who employed no more than one or two, (6) white collar, (7) skilled manual, (8) semi-skilled manual, and (9) unskilled manual workers. Two more categories were needed, one for married women who had left the labour market and another for retired men. All but the first, the fifth and the last two of these groups sold their labour and, according to the Marxist definition, can be described as working class. Such a definition is not without its use but it does less to explain Caversham’s society and history than it does to chart Caversham’s relations with the rest of the world. In Caversham, as Weber might have said, we can accept the centrality of the division between capital and labour in creating the stratification system, but must recognise the importance of the division between manual and non-manual labour and the differentiation of the manual category on the basis of skill. Contemporaries also thought these distinctions important. What status people attributed to these different groups or labels, and the extent to which differences in status reflected a consensus about values, can no longer be answered conclusively, but the

surviving evidence will be addressed.

This book is organised as follows. It consists of a series of essays which do not constitute a narrative but pursue a number of themes. Following this Introduction, I sketch an introduction to Caversham, the principal focus for this book, and the area known, then and now, as The Flat. The Flat contained a large part of Caversham but also included the neighbouring boroughs of South Dunedin and St Kilda. The next two chapters look at small handicraft trades and skilled women workers, my intention being to lay bare the values and norms which structured work in handicraft trades and the gendering of work. Then I investigate Caversham's major industries, the building and metal trades (focusing on the railway workshops). Again, my intention is to identify the dominant values and norms in two quite different industries and to assess the influence of the handicrafts.

The next two chapters investigate politics in Caversham and its neighbouring suburbs, for the electorate of Caversham ceased to exist in 1908. Much of the attention in these chapters will focus on political mobilisation and the construction of ideology. This will permit us to look at what contemporaries thought about their work, their society, and its future. More to the point, these chapters will allow us to carefully study the construction of the meaning attached to words such as work, labour, class and socialism. The two chapters on politics are indispensable to understanding the world of the skilled and the way in which they set out to build a new world. I have never accepted the view that social and political history can or should be separated; only by their being taken together can either be understood. The political history of this small area had an unusual significance for New Zealand in this period but also allows us to observe the process whereby men and women constructed a discourse and a politics centred on social class. In the process a new consciousness emerged, moving from the metaphorical, embedded in popular tradition and folkways, to the programmatic, where class consciousness became self conscious and split the community politically in very complex ways, yet in ways that shaped profoundly not only the nature of radicalism in New Zealand, but also that of conservatism. That political movement mirrored and was mirrored by related developments on the job. The final chapter is designed to conclude the study and analyse the nature of society in

Caversham. The labour process is not being portrayed as the key to politics, society and culture but as vitally important.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Reeves started the process in *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, 2 vols, London, 1902, v. 2, ch. 1. Many visitors came to see and report over the next fifteen years and more recently Keith Sinclair, *William Pember Reeves: New Zealand Fabian*, Oxford, 1965 and James Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration: The First Forty Years*, Auckland, 1987, have written analyses. For visitors and commentators from North America, see Peter Coleman, *Progressivism and the World of Reform: New Zealand and the Origins of the American Welfare State*, Lawrence, Kansas, 1987. The origin of the phrase ‘social laboratory’ remains unclear. Sinclair, Reeves, p. 212 implies that Earl Asquith first referred to New Zealand as ‘a laboratory...’.

<sup>2</sup> Subtitled *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism in New Zealand, 1908–1914*, Auckland, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> The debate began with W. H. Oliver’s review of Sinclair’s biography of *William Pember Reeves*, entitled ‘Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern’, in Peter Munz (ed.), *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, 1969. Further contributions came from Olssen, ‘The “Working Class” in New Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 8 (May 1974), pp. 44–60 and ‘Social Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand’, in David Pitt (ed.), *Social Class in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1977, pp. 22–41; Miles Fairburn, ‘Social Mobility and Opportunity in Nineteenth Century Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 13 (May 1979), pp. 43–64; and Christopher Campbell, ‘The “Working Class” and the Liberal Party in 1890’, *NZJH*, v. 9 (May 1975), pp. 41–51. Oliver responded to Olssen, and Olssen to Campbell in the Oct. issues of 1974 and 1975, pp. 182–3 and 200–1 respectively.

<sup>4</sup> These trends had been well identified since the 1950s thanks to several fine theses which are referred to in my essay on ‘The Origins of the Labour Party: A Reconsideration’, *NZJH*, v. 21 (April 1987), pp. 79–96.

<sup>5</sup> Some successful businessmen created a further problem by continuing to list themselves under their craft skill. This happened even with so-called unskilled occupations where, for instance, a mine manager preferred to be

listed as a miner.

[6](#) These ideas have received a preliminary investigation in two articles which I co-authored with Judi Boyd and Jeremy Brecher respectively: 'The Skilled Workers: Journeymen and Masters in Caversham, 1880–1914', *NZJH*, v. 22 (Oct. 1988), pp. 118–33 and 'New Zealand and United States Labour Movements: The View from the Workshop Floor', in Jock Phillips (ed.), *New Worlds? The Comparative History of New Zealand and the United States*, Wellington, 1989, pp. 96–112.

[7](#) The concept of the 'industrial revolution has been much modified of late, largely to rid it of its uniform and evolutionary character, but it is still useful; see David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge, 1969.

[8](#) Richard Price, "'What's in a Name?' Work-place History and "Rank and Filism'", *International Review of Social History*, v. xxiv (1989), pp. 63–64.

[9](#) In *The Red Feds*, and especially Pt II, and 'The Origins of the Labour Party ...', *NZJH*, v. 22 (April 1988), pp. 79–96.

[10](#) See Henry Broadhead, *State Regulation of Labour and Labour Disputes in New Zealand: A Description and a Criticism*, Christchurch, 1908, pp. 165–71.

[11](#) The best studies of 'scientific management' are by Daniel Nelson, especially *Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States*, Madison, 1975.

[12](#) There are several important studies, but Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York and London, 1974, is a seminal Marxist analysis. See also Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1979; Andrew Zimbalist (ed.), *Case Studies in the Labor Process*, New York, 1979; Richard Price, 'The Labour Process and Labour History', *Social History*, v. 8 (Jan. 1983), pp. 57–75 and the subsequent debate between Price and Patrick Joyce in *Social History*, v. 9 (Jan. 1984), pp. 67–76 and v. 9 (May 1984), pp. 217–31; Paul Edwards, *Conflict at Work: A Materialist Analysis of Workplace Relations*, Oxford, 1986; and Craig Littler, *The Development of the Labour Process in Capitalist Societies: A Comparative Study of the Transformation of Work*

*Organization in Britain, Japan and the USA*, Aldershot, 1986.

[13](#) See, for instance, William Lazonick's criticism of Braverman in 'Technological Change and the Control of Work: The Development of Capital-Labour Relations in US Manufacturing Industries', in Howard Gospel & Craig Littler (eds), *Managerial Strategies and industrial Relations*, London, 1983.

[14](#) Raphael Samuel, 'The Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, v. 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 6–72, first called the latter assumptions into question.

[15](#) Richard Price, *Labour in British Society: An Interpretive History*, London, 1987, p. 4.

[16](#) Olssen, 'The Labour Movement and Race in New Zealand', unpublished paper to a Conference on Labour-market Segmentation and Race, Institute of International Social History, Amsterdam, 1990.

[17](#) Anthony Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 219–21.

[18](#) *Islands of History*, Chicago and London, 1985, p. vii.

[19](#) *Competitive Advantage on the Shop Floor*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990. I am grateful to Dr Marcel van der Linden for drawing this book to my attention.

[20](#) *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[21](#) *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[22](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 182–4.

[23](#) *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, ed. and transl. by Eden and Cedar Paul, London, 1943, p. 23.

[24](#) Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York, 1974 and John Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies: A History of Early New South Wales*, Sydney, 1983.

[25](#) Quoted in John H. Goldthorpe *et al.*, *Social Mobility & Class Structure in Modern Britain*, Oxford, 1980, p. 9.

[26](#) 'Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism', in *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1971.

[27](#) *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour*, London, 1964, p. 272.

[28](#) E.g. Henry Pelling, *Popular Society and Politics in Late Victorian Britain*, London, 1968.

[29](#) See, for example, J. M. Barbalet, 'The "Labor Aristocracy" In Context', *Science & Society*, v. 51 (Summer 1987), pp. 133–53.

[30](#) *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, London, 1974.

[31](#) R. Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*, Oxford, 1976 and G. Crossick, *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society*, London, 1978.

[32](#) *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840–1914*, Cambridge, 1991, p. 57.

[33](#) R. Stevens, 'Towards a Class Analysis of New Zealand', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, v. 14 (June 1978), pp. 113–29.

[34](#) See the fascinating article by John Child, who set out to see whether World War I had accomplished the same dramatic reduction in the skilled–unskilled differential as it had in Britain, only to conclude that scarcely any differential ever existed; 'Wages Policy and Wages Movements in New Zealand, 1914–1923', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, v. 13 (1971), pp. 164–76.

[35](#) David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles*, London and New York, 1979, and Peter Stearns, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labour: A Cause Without Rebels*, New Brunswick, NJ, [1971].

[36](#) Roger Penn, *Skilled Workers in the Class Structure*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 129.

[37](#) *Skill and the English Working Class, 1870–1914*, London, 1980, ch. 7.

[38](#) *Ibid.*, p. 15 (quoting H. Renold).

[39](#) For recent work which calls in question the typicality of textiles and demonstrates the remarkable diversity of work experiences, even in industrial Britain, see Raphael Samuel, 'The Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, v. 3 (Spring 1977), and Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England*, London, 1980.

[40](#) For Britain see R. H. Tawney, 'The Economics of Boy Labour', *Economic Journal*, v. 19 (Dec. 1909), pp. 517–37; R. A. Bray, *Boy Labour and Apprenticeship*, London, 1911; J. A. Hobson, *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, London, 1896, p. 255; Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, London, 1902, pp. 463–73. The thesis was given a new lease of life by Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism*.

[41](#) *Skill and the English Working Class*, pp. 46–50. More also points out that much of the evidence for a dramatic decline came from London, an atypical city. See also O. J. Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, London, 1912, p. 161 for the ‘old’ system.

[42](#) More, *Skill and the English Working Class*, p. 182.

[43](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43 and ch. 5.

[44](#) Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage*, p. 6.

[45](#) N. B. Dearle, *Industrial Training*, London, 1914, pp. 20–27.

[46](#) The most sensitive exploration of the Industrial Revolution’s impact on the English language remains Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950*, London, 1958.

[47](#) Marxists have continued to try to salvage the central insights. For an incisive critique see Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, Cambridge, 1979. It should be noted that, when analysing contemporary politics, Marx often noted the importance of intermediate classes and the role of social mobility in preventing class formation; see Goldthorpe, *Social Mobility & Class Structure in Modern Britain*, pp. 4–9.

[48](#) An interesting point made by David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, ‘Social History and its Discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language’, *Social History*, v. 17 (May 1992), pp. 165–88. Some contemporary attempts to salvage Marxist theory retain a materialist bias (i.e. the economic determines the social etc.) but incorporate into their definition of class a political test; e.g. N. Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, London, 1973 and *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, London, 1975; Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and State*, London, 1978, and *The Debate on Classes*, London, 1989.

[49](#) This is what I took J. P. Sartre to mean in *La Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Paris, 1960, and especially in his lengthy introduction, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel Barnes, New York, 1963.

[50](#) Norman Wiley, ‘America’s Unique Class Politics: The Interplay of the Labor, Credit and Commodity Markets’, *American Sociological Review*, v. 32 (1967), pp. 529–41.

[51](#) Weber, *Economy and Society*, G. Roth and C. Wittich (eds), New York, 1968.

[52](#) For instance, Pitrim Sorokin, *Social Mobility*, New York, 1927 and Goldthorpe, *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain*, Oxford,

1980. There is also an extensive American historiography on social mobility; see Stefan Themstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis 1880–1970*, Cambridge, Mass., 1973, and Clyde and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Nineteenth Century Poughkeepsie*, Cambridge, Mass., 1978.

[53](#) See Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx*, New York, 1952.

[54](#) F. Parkin, *Class, Inequality and Political Order*, London, 1971, (ed.), *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*, London, 1974, and *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*; Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, London, 1973, and *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge, 1984.

[55](#) This tradition derives from Max Weber; see S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix (eds), *Class, Status and Power*, London, 1954; J. A. Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, Toronto, 1964. See also Mary and Robert Jackman, 'An Interpretation of the Relation Between Objective and Subjective Social Status', *American Sociological Review*, v. 38 (1973), pp. 569–82.

[56](#) I have been inclined to this view myself; see 'The "Working Class" in New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 8 (April 1974), pp. 44–60.

[57](#) It is appropriate to cite here a work which illustrates the point and deeply influenced me; R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset (eds), *Class, Status and Power*, 2nd ed., London, 1967.

[58](#) 'Strategies of Social Closure in Class Formation', in Parkin (ed.), *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*, p. 1.

[59](#) A point made with particular eloquence by Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, New York, 1978, Appendix II, pp. 225–63 (trans. from the 1939 German ed. by Edmund Jephcott).

[60](#) 'An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification', in Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, Glencoe, Ill., 1949, p. 71. The best recent use of this method is Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, New York, 1973.

[61](#) See Bernard Barber, *Social Stratification: A Comparative Analysis of Structure and Process*, New York, 1957, pp. 100–11.

[62](#) 'Towards a Theory of Social Stratification', in Parkin (ed.), *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*, pp. 55–101.

[63](#) E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York, 1963, p. 11.

[64](#) I have looked at this problem from the perspective of American history in 'The Case of the Socialist Party that Failed, or Further Reflections on an American Dream', *Labor History*, v. 29 (Fall 1988), pp. 416–49.

[65](#) Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York, 1988, p. 79. Scott has further developed her critique in 'The Evidence of Experience', *Critical Inquiry*, v. 17 (Summer 1991), pp. 773–97.

[66](#) Mary and Robert Jackman, *Class Awareness in the United States*, Berkeley, 1983, p. 164, argue that an autonomous model is appropriate for husbands but that a familial one is appropriate for working wives. For the opposite view see Ida Harper Simpson, David Stark and Robert A. Jackson, 'Class Identification Processes of Married Working Men and Women', *American Sociological Review*, v. 53 (April 1988), pp. 284–93.

[67](#) 'Working-class Culture and Working-class Politics in London, 1870–1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', *Journal of Social History*, v. 7 (Summer 1974), pp. 460–508.

[68](#) Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832–1982*, New York, 1983, p. 102. For a useful study of the 'linguistic turn', see Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History*, Berkeley and London, 1989.

[69](#) Jones, *Languages of Class*, p. 21.

[70](#) Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 57.

[71](#) *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[72](#) Jones, *Languages of Class*, p. 19.

[73](#) A point made by Mayfield and Thorne, 'Social History and its Discontents ...'. In response to an attack on their argument, which I found unpersuasive, they have made this point more clearly; see Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, 'The Poverty of Protest: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language—A Reply', *Social History*, v. 18 (Jan. 1993), pp. 1–15, and Mayfield and Thorne, 'Reply to "The Poverty of Protest" ...', *ibid.*, v. 18 (May 1993), pp. 219–33.

[74](#) *Visions of the People*, p. 28. He ignores the best study of the subject, which calls in question his tendency to equate 'populism' and 'radicalism'; Michael Roe, *Kenealy and the Tichborne Case: A Study in Mid-Victorian*

*Populism*, Melbourne, 1974, ch. 7.

[75](#) Mayfield and Thorne, 'Social History and its Discontents ...', p. 169. Joyce robustly responds in *Social History*, v. 18 (Jan. 1993), pp. 81–85; and Mayfield and Thorne reply (and have the better of the exchange) in *ibid.*, v. 18 (May 1993), pp. 222–4.

[76](#) Mayfield and Thorne, 'Social History and its Discontents...'. p. 187 (citing Paul de Man, 'The rhetoric of temporality').

[77](#) *Islands of History*, p. 149.

[78](#) I first explored this briefly in 'Social Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand', in David Pitt (ed.), *Social Class in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1977. On pre-industrial societies see Michael Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975, pp. 24, 29, 43, and Joan Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, New York, 1978, pp. 16–21. Katz has defined pre-industrial in terms of transience, newness, 'the intermingling of its population, the small scale of its enterprise, the high degree of self-employment, and the continued unity of work and residence'; see *The People of Hamilton*, p. 24. He also noted that pre-industrial society was characterised by a high level of overlap between social, economic and political power (p. 29). Rulers, owners and rich were, by and large, the same people (p. 43). The sense of a warm and cohesive community is contradicted, however, by transience and rigid structures of inequality.

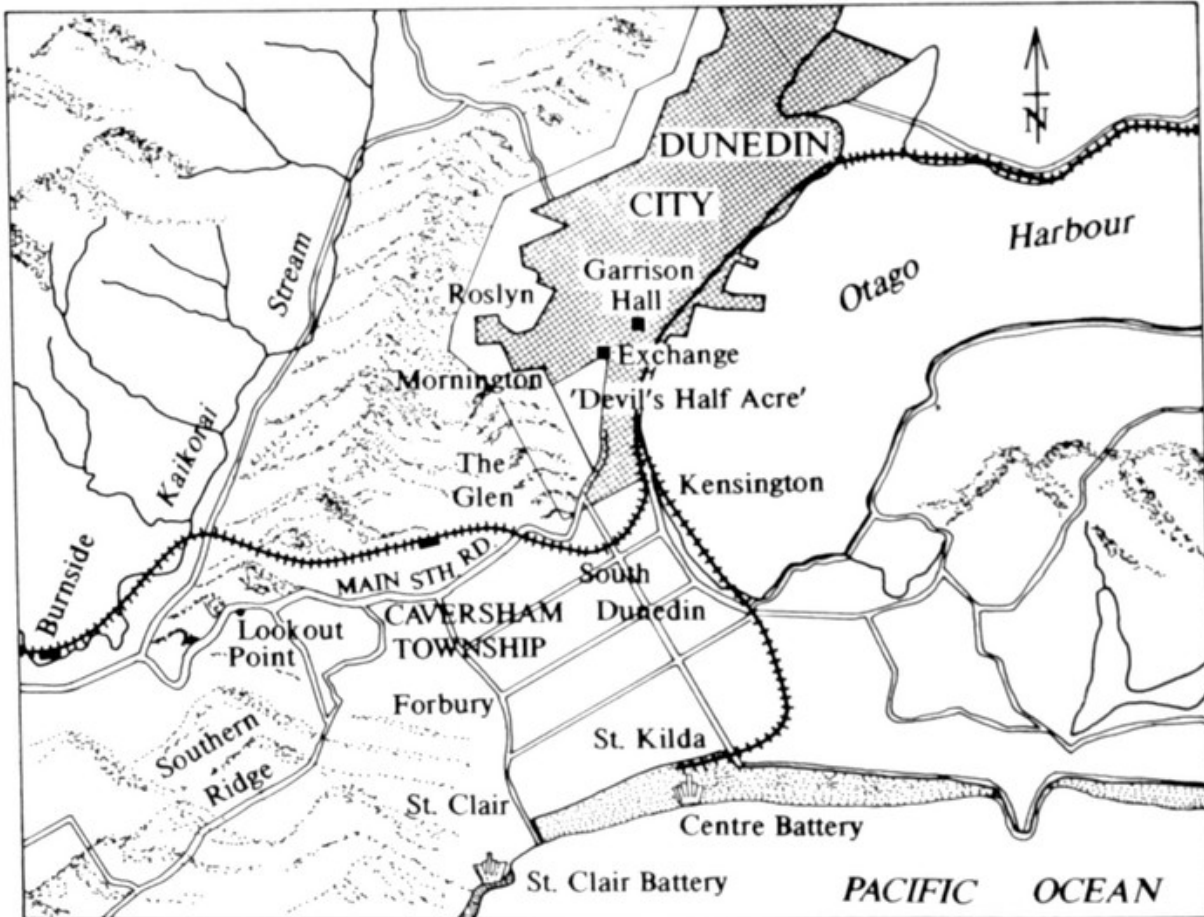
[79](#) Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain, 1700–1820*, London, 1985, chs 2 and 3.

[80](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 174–5.

## CHAPTER 2

### ***From Road Board to Suburb***

Although the essays in this book do not require a detailed knowledge of Caversham, the various industries looked at existed there; the implications of the patterns analysed in Chapters 3 through 8 can only be understood by understanding something of that community. Localities structure labour markets and constitute independent dimensions of the stratification system, exerting significant consequences on socio-economic, gender and ethnic inequalities.<sup>1</sup> From its earliest days until the 1920s the markets for many products were also local. The extension and electrification of the tramway system in 1905 absorbed some local Caversham markets into city-wide markets but most people lived and worked in the area and still did most of their shopping in Caversham or its neighbouring borough, South Dunedin. Much of what they bought was also grown or made in Caversham or South Dunedin, although many raw materials and all technologies had to be imported from elsewhere. High levels of transience show that labour markets were not local, but everyone recognised Caversham, an independent borough until 1905, as a distinct place. It ran around the edge of an area known as The Flat, which included South Dunedin and St Kilda, and Caversham's lower reaches were on The Flat. The Flat constituted a self-enclosed physical space which Caversham bordered.<sup>2</sup> The physical distinctiveness of The Flat, bounded by hills and ocean, gave topographical form to other boundaries. Those who lived in Caversham tended to think of themselves as separate from (if not above) The Flat; outsiders often failed to notice the boundary.

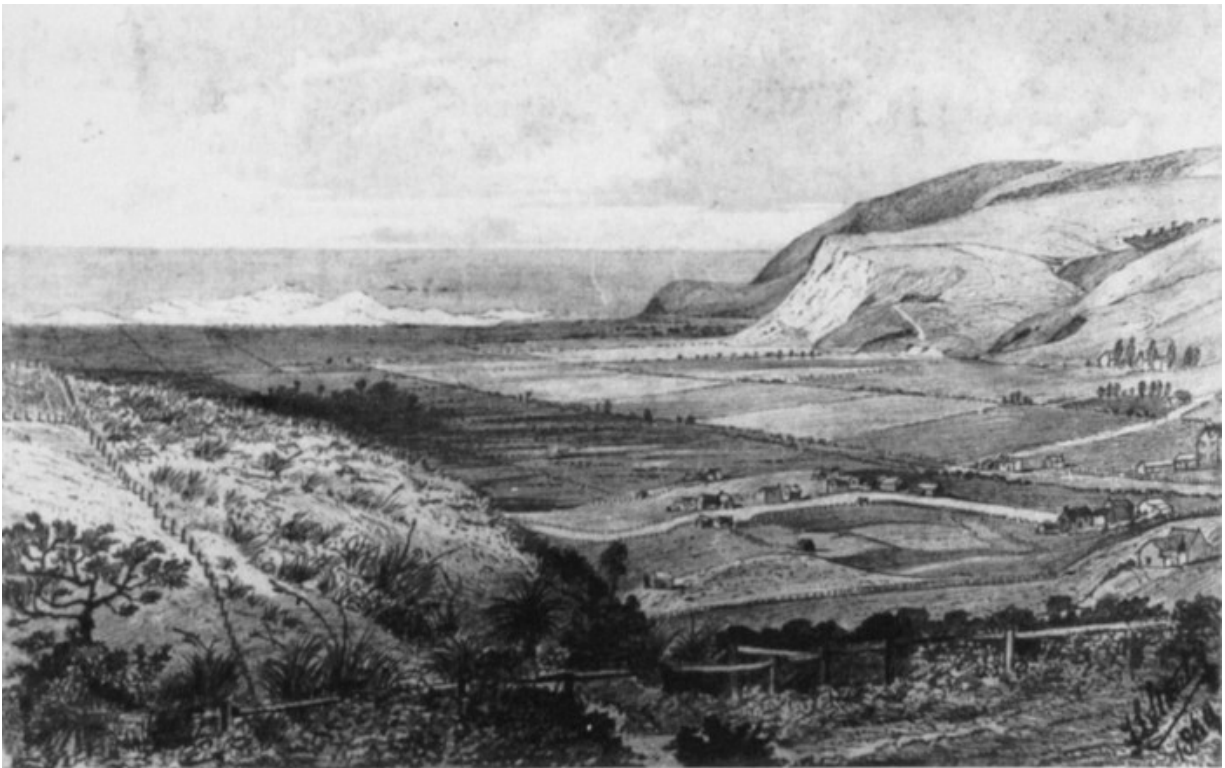


*Topography of The Flat*

# I

When Frederick Tuckett, a crusty Quaker, walked down the eastern coast of the South Island looking for a site for a Scots-Presbyterian colony, he chose the site that became Dunedin. A long harbour ran parallel to the Pacific Ocean for about thirty-two kilometres before ending in a low-lying and marshy area only a couple of miles from the sea. To the east of this long harbour lay the broken hills of the Peninsula, while to the west large ridges rose to some 1,000 metres. The ‘organised settlers’, who arrived in 1848, settled at the western side of the harbour’s head but soon began to occupy the southern end of the Peninsula and to move along the edges of the marshes to a low ridge of hills which bounded the marshy flat to the south-west. These hills—the southern ridge—faced north-east across the marshy flat, rising to about 130 metres, and they soon attracted one of the

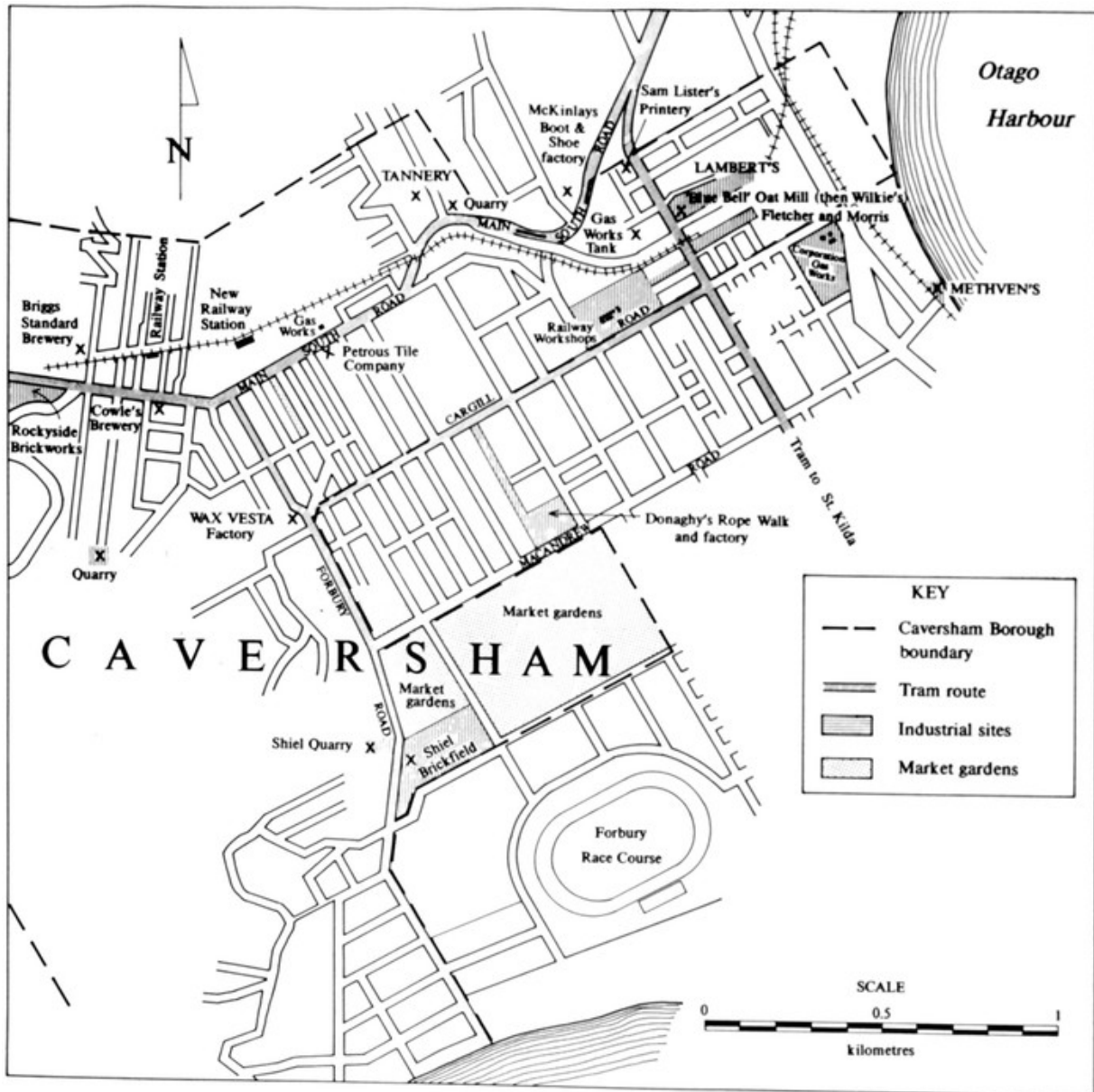
wealthiest early settlers, W. H. Valpy, who had migrated from India with his large family and several retainers. He employed men to ‘form a crude road from the southern end of Princes Street to his farm at Forbury’ and later had a path built to the beaches on the Pacific Ocean. Others followed suit in the next decade, including David Calder, John McIndoe and Valpy’s gardener, John Anderson.



*The Reverend Thomas Litchfield Stanley’s pencil sketch of ‘Swampy flatland 1869’, done from the Montecillo ridge above The Glen, shows the early straggle of houses which constituted the Parkside township, the Benevolent’s first building (right) and the early farms. It is typical of many arcadian images of early European settlement. Hocken Library.*

Valpy named the area where he developed a farm after his wife’s birthplace in England, Caversham-on-Thames (now a suburb of Reading), and called the place where he built his home Forbury, after a public garden.<sup>3</sup> Others began farming on the southern ridge and to the south, in the estuary of the Kaikorai River, around Saddle Hill, and on the hills around the Taieri Plains. One of the main roads south from Dunedin followed Valpy’s footpath for a distance, then skirted the hills to the north of the marshy flat, the Mornington ridge, then climbed up the Caversham Valley

to Lookout Point before descending to Burnside and the Kaikorai River's estuary. Parts of this road became a quagmire in wet weather. So too did Anderson's Bay Road, which marked the northern boundary to Caversham and The Flat.

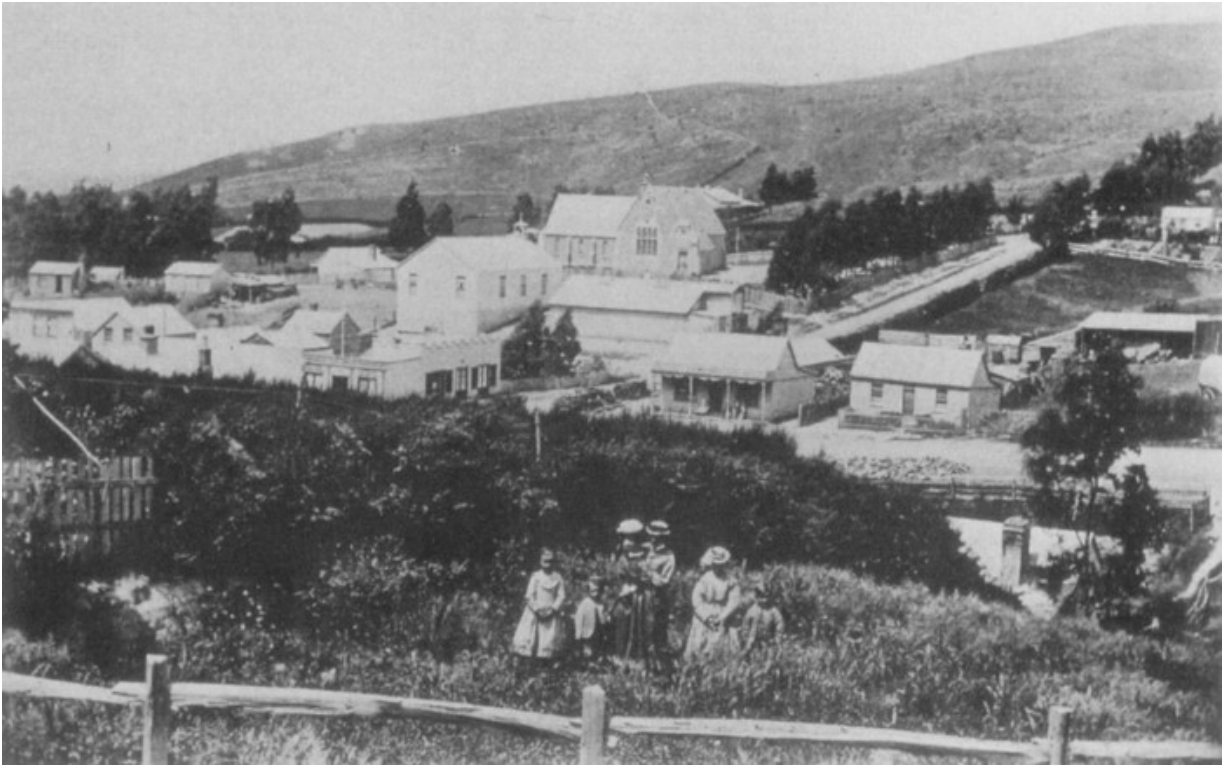


*Main Streets and Institutions in Caversham Borough*

The gold rushes of the 1860s brought considerable growth and in 1865 the Provincial Council established the Caversham Road Board (along with sixty others).<sup>4</sup> Some wealthy families built large homes on the Montecillo ridge, which ran down from Mornington and overlooked the later sports

field of Carisbrook, and the provincial surveyor, John Turnbull Thomson, built a large two-storeyed wooden house known as Rockyside (1856) on the shady side of the valley. A young Scottish immigrant, John Sidey, had a small cottage and farm on the southern ridge, just east of Caversham Valley. He did so well supplying the goldfields that he built a more handsome home which he named after his birthplace, Corstorphine, in Edinburgh. During the 1860s other well-to-do citizens settled in the area, including Francis Fulton, who built a handsome two-storeyed brick house named Lisburn (to commemorate the family's origins in County Antrim).<sup>5</sup> Few of these families was Scottish or Presbyterian. Valpy even sided with Samuel Shaw, the 'Cockney spouter', in calling for the eight-hour day in opposition to Captain William Cargill.<sup>6</sup>

The Main South Road, which ran along the lower reaches of the Mornington ridge, was developed for the traffic between Dunedin and the goldfields. Pubs, stables and a few shops sprang up to cater to the miners, the 'bullockies' who drove the drays and carts and bullock wagons, and anybody else who wished to travel south or north. At the bottom of the hills a small township grew, named Caversham, where travellers could stop to gather their strength for the climb up Caversham Valley to Lookout Point. The provincial government built a school there in 1863, on College Street, and the authorities let the contract for postal services to a storekeeper. At Parkside (overlooked by the Montecillo ridge) another small township grew to meet the needs of travellers. A small valley known as The Glen, immediately west of the Montecillo ridge, rose sharply from Parkside up into Mornington.



*J. W. Allen's shot of the Main South Road, c. 1868–70, with Caversham School in the centre and the store and post office visible (second from right). Hocken Library.*

The availability of cheap land provided Caversham township with two of its most distinctive institutions, the Benevolent Institution Home and the Industrial School. The Benevolent Institution, formed by some of Dunedin's leading citizens in 1862, opened a small home at the corner of Alexandra Street and the Main South Road in 1865. In the 1880s this was replaced with an imposing three-storeyed brick institution which could house 300 persons,

most of them old and destitute, although a small number of unmarried mothers and unemployed men on 'outdoor relief' were sometimes in residence. The 'Benny', as it was widely known then, stood among eight acres of kitchen and flower gardens. The recipients of public charity were expected to contribute to their own upkeep. The same leading citizens also took the initiative in establishing the Industrial School and its farm at Lookout Point for abandoned children, orphans and the children of drunken or profligate parents. By 1880 the school housed 262 children. They walked down the long hill to church each Sunday, reminding everyone that there, but for the grace of God, any child might go.<sup>7</sup>

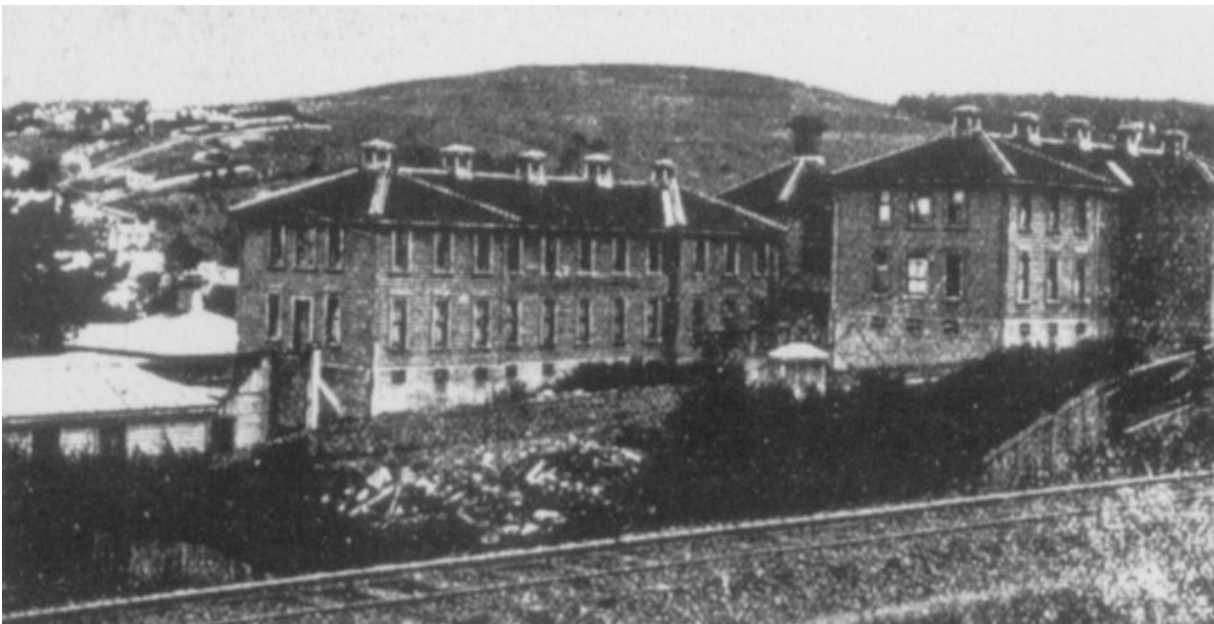


*The main building of the Benevolent, in a forbidding Victorian gothic style, made a powerful statement. Alfred Burton took this photograph in the mid-1880s. Museum of New Zealand.*

During the Vogel era growth became dramatic and by 1878 Caversham township had 3,425 inhabitants and eight hotels. Dunedin had grown rapidly in the early 1860s and a shanty town of tents and rickety wooden buildings had been built on the slopes to the south of the original settlement, known (to some) by 1900 as ‘The Devil’s Half Acre’. The central city became renowned for filth, stench and epidemics. Land prices soared. People began moving into the cheap land around the marshes of The Flat itself and some began settling on the drier areas, such as Kensington. Real estate agents described The Flat as ‘a salubrious meadow’ where health and vigour would be restored to those suffering from the foetid air of the city. Ozone became a metaphor for health, and The Flat had plenty.<sup>8</sup>

The construction of the railroad south, which followed the Main South Road, allowed the province to open the two-storeyed wooden Immigration Barracks at the foot of Caversham Valley in 1873. There were also detached houses for families, and a wooden fence enclosed the area. Both Kensington and Caversham now boasted railway stations. In 1877 Caversham adopted the New Zealand Act and became a borough, as did several other suburbs once the government allowed for the direct election of mayors.<sup>9</sup> ‘Superimposed on this system [of boroughs] were the numerous “townships” created by private owners of land’ when they subdivided their

blocks, such as Kensington, Parkside, Kew and Forbury. Caversham now referred to the township at the foot of Caversham Valley and the borough, bounded to the north by the Mornington ridge, to the south-east by St Kilda, South Dunedin and the Pacific Ocean, to the east by Otago Harbour, and to the west by Taieri County.<sup>10</sup> Besides Caversham township, the borough of Caversham included one other of similar size, Kensington, and two smaller ones, Parkside and St Clair.



*The Immigration Barracks, shortly before their demolition. The barracks housed single men and women, but the cottages for married couples had largely been sold or destroyed after assisted immigration ended in 1888. The barracks were used for some years as a fever hospital. Hocken Library.*

Many Vogel immigrants settled on The Flat, the skilled Protestants preferring Caversham, while the Irish Catholics and the poorer settled in South Dunedin. By 1901 8 per cent of Caversham's population were Catholic, compared with 17 per cent of South Dunedin's and 14 per cent of Dunedin's. By comparison with other parts of the city, nor were Scots Presbyterians a great force. In 1901 12 per cent were Scots by birth and 33 per cent were Presbyterian (in Roslyn, by comparison, the proportions were 16 per cent and 41 per cent). English born comprised 14 per cent and Anglicans 21 per cent, but the Anglicans, together with the Methodists and Baptists, dominated the area. Ethnic identification and religious adherence appear to have shaped settlement patterns. It is striking to note how many of

Caversham's leading Presbyterians, including the minister throughout the period, were English or, like Sidey had lived in England. Even many prominent Catholics were of English birth and the street names were English (most of them honouring early pioneers of the area).<sup>[11](#)</sup>



*Parkside and Caversham, c. 1886, taken from the railway overhead bridge near the entrance to The Glen. The two-storeyed Parkside Hotel faces the turn in the Main South Road, the Benevolent towers in the centre, and Caversham township in the upper right. The Presbyterian church is just visible in the right background and Barron's mansion to the left. Alfred Burton, Museum of New Zealand.*



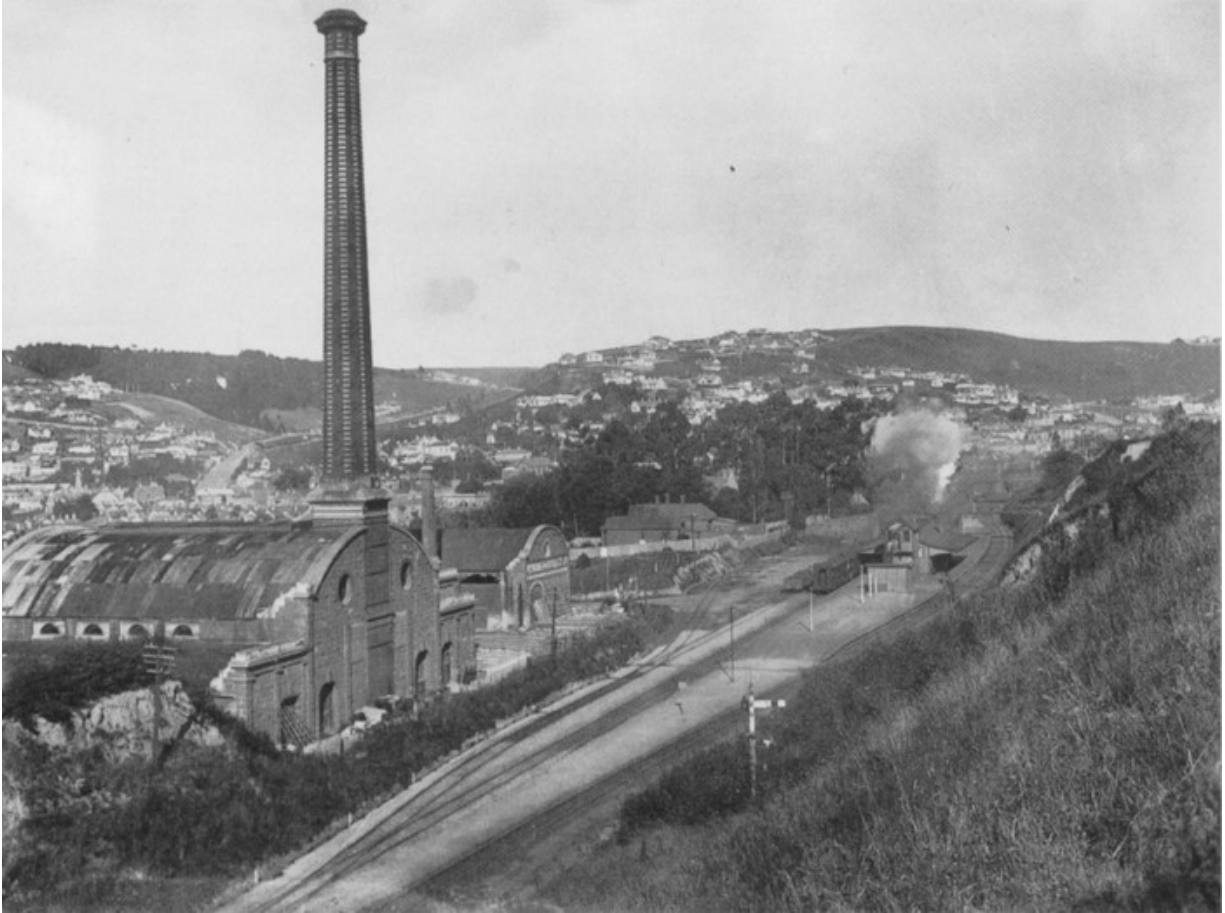
*Alfred Burton's surrealistic shot of Kensington from the Southern Cemetery looks straight down Hillside Road to St Kilda beach. From left to right are the gasworks, White's clay-pipe factory and the towering chimneys of the brickworks, which closed in 1889. The Hillside workshops are just to the right, and McKinlay's boot and shoe factory is hidden by the trees. Museum of New Zealand.*

In the mid-1870s, despite anxieties about flooding, the cheap land on The Flat began to attract industry and people (although the first of two gasworks, two small breweries and a tannery had opened by 1864). In 1873 the government shifted the railway workshops from Port Chalmers, where there was little flat land, to Hillside, near Kensington. In the next eight years another seven major industries located in Caversham borough.<sup>12</sup> Three partners established a brick-making works in Kensington in 1874 which expanded until it had the capacity to produce 60,000 bricks a week in 1887.<sup>13</sup> In 1876 William White's clay-pipe factory also began operations in Kensington, on land leased from the Caledonian Society (J. H. Lambert, a third-generation pipe manufacturer, bought the works in 1888).<sup>14</sup> Just off Cargill Road, the main boundary between Caversham and South Dunedin, M. Donaghy of Geelong established his steam-rope manufactory in 1876 and five years later sold it to Alfred Lee Smith. Smith, a Catholic from Yorkshire and the Managing Director of the Otago Iron Rolling Mill at Burnside, just over the southern ridge, later became a Member of the Legislative Council.<sup>15</sup> In 1878 E. Cochrane opened the Caversham Brewery on the Main South Road, within Caversham township. He successfully

established a market in Southland, and in 1882 he added a malthouse, kiln and bottling plant (Alex Cowie & Co., brewers and malt bottlers, bought the complex in 1890). Late in the 1870s James Briggs, Cochrane's brother-in-law, opened the Standard Brewery in Sydney Street. In 1879 McKinlay and Son opened their boot-making factory, overlooking Kensington on the lower reaches of the Montecillo ridge. In 1880 the New Zealand Flour Mill also opened for business in Kensington. By now The Glen boasted a tannery and Hugh Fox's quarry. The Caversham sandstone quarry, south of the township, also appears to have been operating.

Despite the depression of the 1880s, The Glen Tannery and Wool Rug Manufacturers, Stephen Hutchison's private gasworks,<sup>16</sup> Charles Shiel's brickworks, a cordial manufactory and another large quarry were established.

In 1886 George Methven, a native of Dundee, built a large workshop at the back of his home on Goodall Street, within the township, where he made farm implements. In the early days he carried the iron castings home on his back. In 1896 he went into partnership with his son and an ironfounder, W. S. Gardner of Catherine Street.<sup>17</sup> In 1895 the Rutherfords—Robert Sr and Jr—opened the New Zealand Wax Vesta Co. in the old Immigration Barracks, opposite Hutchison's gas works (assisted immigration having been ended in 1888). Their partner, John Watson, was a fitter who delighted in inventing new machines. In 1901, after the company had been reorganised, the factory moved to new premises on David St, near Forbury Corner, and the Petrous Tile Co. took over the barracks.<sup>18</sup> In that year James Annand's Rockside Brick Company took over the Shiel brothers' old clay site between Caversham Valley Road and the Main South Road. The Shiel brothers relocated to a ten-acre site at Forbury, just over the road from their quarry. An overhead cableway linked the brick works to the quarry, where they mined bluestone for road metal, as well as clay. J. S. Ingram, asphalter, worked at his trade nearby. His sons helped. In 1905 the oldest son sold up to manufacture non-alcoholic beverages in a factory at the corner of David and Marion Streets, but the asphalter's business continued.<sup>19</sup> The largest of these businesses employed between ten and forty workers. Most employed less, and many employed only family members.



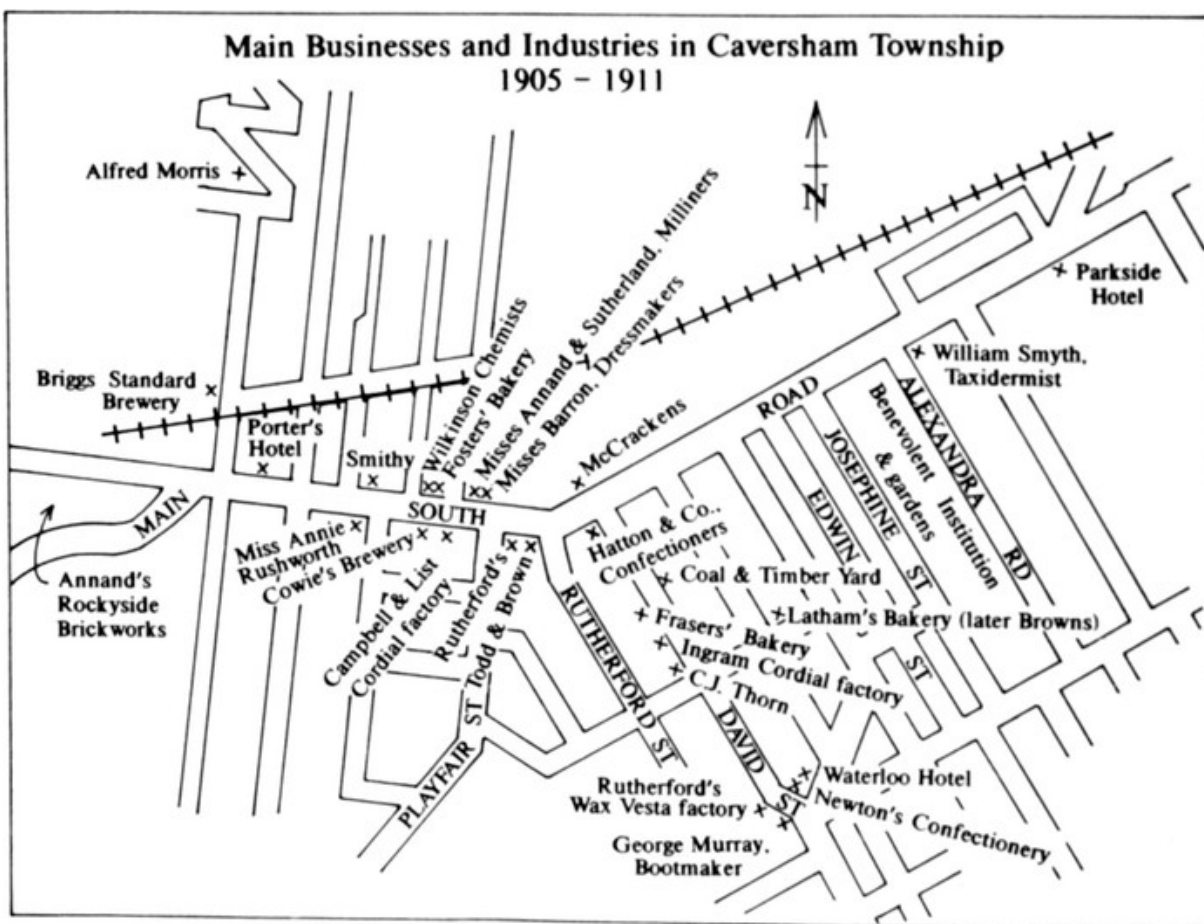
*Stephen Hutchison constructed the Caversham gasworks in 1881 and supplied gas to Caversham, Mornington, Roslyn and later St Kilda. In 1907 the city bought the works. Thereafter the gasholder was used for storage only and most of the buildings were let for industrial purposes. In the 1880s two shifts kept the gasworks operating around the clock, stokers working twelve hours a day, seven days a week. Besides the stokers, trimmers and yardmen, the gasworks employed a tester, an engineer, a furnace-man, a purifier and a scrubber. Gasfitters, tinsmiths, blacksmiths and bricklayers also had roles to play, not to mention meter readers and repair staff. Godber Collection, Album 109, p. 243, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

By 1900 over fifty businesses occupied the Main South Road, David Street, and Forbury Corner. Alma Rutherford described it well.



*A rare photograph of the cableway linking the Shiel quarry and brickworks at Forbury. Hocken Library.*

It became a thriving, busy place where frequent [horse-drawn] trams ground along their mid-street rails, the horse-drawn vehicles of the delivery firms and of the half dozen coal suppliers clopped rhythmically about the streets, and a vigorous anvil chorus issued from the smithy.



Besides the factories already mentioned there were five bakeries, one of which sold 'yesterday's pies for twopence, and they were very good too', while Foster's bakery, opposite the tram stop, sold their famous pork pies and delighted passersby with their astonishing cakes. 'One I remember well was the imitation of a book.'<sup>20</sup> There were also a laundry, several bootmakers' and tailors' workshops, at least two joiners' shops, and others (to be discussed in the next chapter). Five hotels also flourished in 1900, leased or owned by Irishmen (like almost all the pubs on The Flat), although the annual inspection by the Licensing Committee and two majorities for reduction saw two of them closed by 1908. In 1909 the Morris family bought the old Commercial in Caversham township and began manufacturing dubbin. Most of the shops had their own stables, sheds and yards. Old Sam McCracken, the grocer, had a primitive sawmill in his yard, where an ageing horse, 'hitched to a long pole', drove the saw by going round and round in a circle. Every now and again he threw a piece

of wood at the horse to keep it moving.<sup>21</sup>



*Foster's bakery, at the corner of Goodall Street. A large number of bakeries and confectioners ensured that Caversham's residents did not want for pastries, cakes and lollies. Those who did not drink beer or spirits often tended to compensate by eating sugar-rich foods and children quickly acquired the habit. Grocers also carried a wide range of biscuits, including those made at Hudson's factory in the city. Two cordial factories also supplied sugary treats. Hocken Library.*

At the Kensington end of the borough the railway workshops, Lambert's pipe-and tile-making works and the 'Blue Bell' Flour Mill gave the area an industrial character. The workshops dominated Kensington and employed almost 400 men by 1900 and 700 by 1930. The Hillside workshops, as they came to be known, were designed to repair and maintain all the locomotives and rolling stock used in Otago and Southland. In 1873 one blacksmith and his helper constituted the entire workforce. The shops soon had to be expanded.<sup>22</sup> Fitters, turners, boilermakers and machinists were required. Dunedin had no shortage of such skilled men. Goldmining and the expansion of the farming frontier had created opportunities for men skilled

in metal trades. Several large privately owned engineering shops had been established, some of which boasted their own foundries. Most of these shops—such as Shacklock’s, Cossen & Black, and Reid & Gray’s—stood just beyond Kensington, on Crawford and Cumberland Streets. From the beginning the Railways Department had little difficulty attracting and retaining skilled men. The men of the metal trades were the second largest occupational group in Caversham (exceeded only by the men of the building trades). Just east of Kensington, across the Oval, the engine sheds stood, and the black smoke often engulfed the area, including the handsome homes which overlooked the Oval from Park Terrace. On the other corner of the Oval stood the tram sheds.

The population grew as industry expanded. From 1873 onwards the railway contributed to the growth of Caversham township and Kensington. In the early 1880s a new system of horse-drawn tramways opened up new areas of The Flat and integrated the area into the city. The main tramway ran from the Oval, just north of Kensington, to what is now Cargill’s Corner, where it divided, one branch running along Cargill (now Hillside) Road and David Street to Caversham township. The other ran along Hillside Road (now King Edward and Prince Albert Roads) to St Kilda beach. A little later a line was run from Forbury Corner, at the junction of Cargill Road and David Street, to St Clair. Horses supplied the traction on these routes and the company ran extensive stables in David Street.<sup>[23](#)</sup>



*Cargill Road marked the boundary between Caversham, on the right, and South Dunedin, on the left. The horse-drawn tram from the city to St Clair had operated since 1881, but electrification, the double track and the extension to Caversham township was completed in 1905, following amalgamation. A new line along the Main South Road was also opened in 1905. The view is towards Forbury Corner and the southern ridge, where the line drops into the Playfair Street gully. St Peter's church is on the right. Hocken Library.*

Settlement spread along the tram routes. Men with capital erected tenements and semi-detached houses to accommodate people at low rentals.<sup>24</sup> People still shifted to the area to escape the stench and filth of Dunedin city, not to mention their fear of epidemics of typhoid and scarlet fever. They also wanted cheaper land, cheaper houses, and jobs.<sup>25</sup> Those who had bought large areas around Cargill Road or off the Main South Road now cashed in on their speculations. Most of the subdivisions on The Flat were very small. By 1900 South Dunedin, which grew by almost 50 per cent between 1883 and 1900, had 12.9 persons per square acre as against Caversham's 4.4 persons.<sup>26</sup> The immigrants who settled on The Flat and bought these sections usually built small wooden cottages. So did speculative builders, such as Charles Thorn, who built most of the houses in College Street, and John Hewton, who demolished the Immigration Barracks in 1904–5 and used the timber to build cottages around Glasgow Street in South Dunedin.<sup>27</sup> In South Dunedin and the poorest streets in Caversham almost 90 per cent of all houses were three-or four-roomed wooden cottages with roofs of corrugated iron on lots of twenty poles or

less. The smallest had two rooms and a lean-to on one-sixteenth of an acre. The kitchen and laundry occupied the lean-to and the family lived in the two rooms. Skilled men with regular jobs could usually afford four-or even six-roomed houses and an eighth or even a quarter of an acre, although they had to skimp and save to get these. In Caversham borough, by contrast, the proportion of larger houses was greater than in South Dunedin. Regardless of house size the long-drop toilet was not of much use on The Flat because of the poor drainage, most of the area lying below sea level. Buckets and earth privies became most widely favoured and the night-soil collector became an important if unsavoury figure in the local community.<sup>28</sup> Between 1900 and 1930 many households in Caversham obtained flush toilets. St Clair led the way.



*Caversham township, seen from Rockside, probably c. 1914. The train gathering speed as it approaches the tunnel, the two-storeyed terraced shops, the heart of the retail centre, Caversham School and the Presbyterian church are all visible. The large building in the centre background is the Wax Vesta factory, near Forbury Corner. To the right are the first houses in Kew, scattered among trees and paddocks. Hocken Library.*

Caversham township's topography did not lend itself in any simple way to any pattern of social differentiation, although the better-off tended to

prefer the slopes overlooking The Flat. The northern side of Caversham Valley got little sun in winter and the sections were small. Most houses, other than Thomson's, were also small and usually close together. Locals knew the area as 'Siberia', for the water in the precipitous gutters froze in winter. In 1897 the Salvation Army bought Thomson's Rockside and used it as a home for 'fallen girls' (they too were marched through the streets each Sunday to the Army's Citadel in South Dunedin).<sup>29</sup> On the lower slopes of Caversham Valley, and especially along the Main South Road, several small factories, terraced houses and two-storeyed buildings were built, often with a shop on the ground floor, a house above and stables and yards behind. Above and to the east of the township, in the Playfair Street gully, larger and sunnier sections existed. The houses here were also larger, usually some sort of villa. W. Scoular's grand house, Hazelhurst, built around 1880 and set amid four acres of gardens, presided over Playfair Street and Hazel Avenue. On the damp ground at the foot of Caversham Valley, just below the township, small sections and cheap two-roomed cottages dominated. Even here, however, handsome two-storeyed homes, often built in brick, were not uncommon. The Shiel Seniors lived on Fitzroy Street in a simple two-storeyed brick villa, and a successful bricklayer, Richard Grimmett, built Faringdon Villa, named after the Berkshire town in which he and his wife had been married. Charles Thorn, joiner and undertaker, also lived at the foot of the Valley, in Marion (now Thorn) Street. One suspects, at times, that the English disliked hills.



*The low-lying areas of The Flat had poor drainage and by the late 1880s were often engulfed in industrial smoke from the gasworks, Lambert's and the railways. Houses remained small and cheap. J. W. Allen, c. 1880, Otago Early Settlers' Association.*

To the south of Caversham township (but within the borough), Forbury Road and St Clair had attracted the well-to-do since the 1880s. A horse-drawn tram service linking St Clair to Dunedin began in 1881 to enable the merchants and professionals who lived there to get to work by 9 am. Dr F. C. Batchelor, the city's main specialist in women's diseases, ran a small hospital there and lived up the hill (although in Caversham the midwives, Mrs Cardno of Playfair Street and Mrs Simpson of Josephine Street, delivered most babies).<sup>30</sup> By 1901 St Clair 'was conspicuous for beautiful residences [and] the suburban homes of wealthy businessmen'. Many of these homes were worth more than £2,000 and boasted stables, extensive gardens and tennis courts. (The grand houses of Caversham, such as Secular's, also usually boasted tennis courts.) As one came off the St Clair hill and on to The Flat smaller houses and sections became more numerous, but it remained a relatively exclusive and respectable residential area much favoured by clerks and warehousemen.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, although Caversham and South Dunedin shared one Anglican church, St Clair had its own. And on

the heights above St Clair stood Edward Cargill's elegant castle, The Cliffs, designed by his son-in-law, F. W. Petre, one of the country's most prominent architects and a leading member of the Catholic community in Caversham and Dunedin. Many well-to-do families also lived along Forbury Road, such as Mrs Speight (widow of Dunedin's most famous brewer); William Dawson, Speight's surviving partner and Caversham's Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) in 1890–93; Sir William Barron, merchant, runholder and MHR for Caversham in the 1880s; and C. N. Baeyertz, the tart apostle of 'Civilisation' and managing editor of the *Triad*. In the 1880s, indeed, Forbury Road and St Clair were the city's most fashionable addresses. Later, when Charles Shiel celebrated his firm's success by building Caversham's largest two-storeyed brick house, he built it at Forbury, adjacent to the brickworks.<sup>[32](#)</sup>



*William Wilson's large house typified those built along the upper side of Forbury Road in the 1880s and 1890s. Wilson had established the Otago Iron Foundry in the 1860s, one of the province's first, just north of the Oval. Hocken Library.*

The borough of Caversham thus included three distinct sub-areas,

Kensington, Caversham township, and St Clair (a fourth, Kew, occupied the hill above Forbury Road, but its boundaries with the others were subjectively defined). Each had its own shopping centre although Kensington's merged with South Dunedin's at Cargill's Corner (then known as Ogg's Corner after a colourful publican), the hub of both suburbs long before The Flat's first Picture Palace opened there in 1911.<sup>33</sup> The three sub-areas included in Caversham borough also contained twenty-six separate subdivisions. Some of these were widely known as place names while others did not survive the process of subdivision. For instance, on the western side of Caversham Valley, Rockside quickly attracted those with little capital who wanted to have their own homes. Much of the land was held on lease from the Railways Department, the Harbour Board and the Presbyterian church. Forbury Corner, at the junction of Forbury and Cargill Roads, was well known. Here the Waterloo Hotel, leased after 1907 by William Crosson, faced the Primitive Methodist church. Sir William Barron's mansion overlooked them both. When the electric tramway opened for service in 1905 the Corner became a major stop. Parkside, the area between the workshops and Surrey Street, dominated by the Benevolent, was also a recognised sub-area. The subdivision in the Playfair Street gully became known as Hazelhurst and, as John Sidey subdivided parts of his estate, settlement also moved up the hill into the areas known as Kew and Corstorphine. Despite the complex relationship between geography and socio-economic differentiation, contemporaries distinguished the three main sub-areas in terms of their prevailing 'quality', subject to any necessary qualifications. Kensington was 'dirty', 'cheap' and 'rough', while St Clair was 'clean', 'expensive' and 'refined'. Years later C. W. Shiel's daughter recalled, 'No, we were Kew ... the boundary of Kew ...', not Caversham.<sup>34</sup> Clark and Stedman have demonstrated that contemporary perceptions were well founded, although contemporaries also easily recognised the important variations and exceptions. These variations paled into insignificance, however, compared to 'the area [around Glasgow Street in South Dunedin where] the Irish were ... a pretty tough area ... a red light area and the people couldn't even afford red lights'.<sup>35</sup> Several 'Syrian' families also lived nearby.

Caversham borough belonged to and overlooked The Flat. By 1901

some 5,266 persons lived in the borough, about 12 per cent of Dunedin's population, and they occupied just over 1,000 dwellings. Adjacent South Dunedin, with 5,363 persons and 1,110 dwellings, was much smaller in area and much more densely populated. According to one analysis 90 per cent of the houses in South Dunedin were of low value and they occupied very small sections. In Caversham only Cargill Road, the Main South Road and smaller areas within other streets were similar.<sup>36</sup> St Kilda, which lay between South Dunedin and the Pacific but shared its southern boundary with Caversham (at St Clair), had only 1,700 inhabitants in 1901, although over the next fifteen years it grew more rapidly than any other borough. Here sections were larger, there were fewer low-value houses and only 3 per cent of the adult males were labourers. Across The Flat and in Caversham, as the borough's letter books show, many sections could 'accommodate milking cows, carriage horses and hacks, poultry, and even pigs in evil-smelling sties ...'. It was, literally, *urbs in rure*, and the dozen families who farmed the upper reaches of the southern ridge confirmed the fact.<sup>37</sup>



*Caversham borough, minus Forbury Road and St Clair. The view looks up toward the harbour, across Parkside to The Glen (beneath the cliff) and the Montecillo ridge. Kensington and a bit of South Dunedin are in the background. Alfred Burton, c. 1898, Museum of New Zealand.*

In 1900 three boroughs—Caversham, South Dunedin and St Kilda—shared political power over The Flat with the Ocean Beach Domain Board, a body of appointed members charged with protecting The Flat from the Pacific Ocean.<sup>38</sup> It had long been recognised that the growth in population had eroded the justification for having three local authorities, but parochialism prevented amalgamation.<sup>39</sup> Besides, while others on The Flat might have envied Caversham its water reticulation scheme, none envied the debt of £27,500. In 1904 the desire for an electric tramway service, which required the hideous expense of widening Cargill Road, persuaded Caversham Borough's ratepayers to amalgamate with Dunedin city. Only the inhabitants of Caversham township opposed the move, but they doubtless appreciated the opening of a new line from 'the terminus' on Sydney Street along the Main Road to the city. In 1905 South Dunedin followed suit. Both areas became wards in the enlarged Dunedin and at first had three representatives each on the enlarged city council.<sup>40</sup> By 1913 most people, when completing official forms for government, had stopped describing themselves as residents of Caversham; instead they used Dunedin.<sup>41</sup>

## II

The region was socially mixed but predominantly working class (although one of the purposes of this book is to explain precisely what that phrase meant and how its meaning changed). In 1902 58.2 per cent of the men who registered to vote were either skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled. By 1922 the proportion had fallen only slightly to 55 per cent. Small employers and the self-employed constituted another 15.8 per cent of the population in 1902 and 12.4 per cent in 1922. The semi-professionals, officials and white-collar workers, who also sold their labour but did not regard themselves as working class, were 17.8 per cent of the population in 1902 and almost 19.3 per cent in 1922. The proportion of retired men also increased over the period, from two men (0.2 per cent) in 1902 to 95 men (5.1 per cent) in 1922. Employers and professionals remained constant at about 8 per cent. These trends, summarised in Table 2.1, are broadly consistent with what is known of national trends, except that the trends are less marked. Stability

rather than change characterised Caversham's occupational structure.<sup>42</sup>

TABLE 2.1  
**Male Occupational Structure, 1902–22**

	1902	1911	1914	1922
employers	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.5
professionals	4.3	5.0	5.6	4.7
semi-professionals	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.8
masters	15.8	13.7	14.4	12.4
officials	3.6	4.0	3.8	4.1
white-collar	13.0	12.1	12.3	13.4
skilled	30.9	28.5	27.3	28.1
semi-skilled	5.1	5.5	6.0	7.2
unskilled	22.2	24.0	23.2	19.7
retired	0.2	1.7	2.2	5.1

The proportion of the borough's population living in each sub-area did not alter greatly between 1901 and 1922. Most people lived in the area around Caversham township—just under 50 per cent of the borough's entire population in 1902 and slightly more in 1922. Kensington, the most densely populated sub-area, housed 26.2 per cent in 1902, rose slightly in 1905, then fell consistently until in 1922 only about 18 per cent of the population lived there. Rockyside, the cold northern slope of Caversham valley, also densely populated, housed almost 11 per cent in 1902, but also fell over the period to 8.5 per cent. In reality, however, the declining proportion living in Kensington and Rockyside reflected no absolute decline—in fact growth occurred—but the expansion of Corstorphine-Kew (from 2.4 to 8.2 per cent). St Clair also grew from about 14 to 15.5 percent.

The occupational distribution of the male population varied considerably from one sub-area to another, as Table 2.2 shows. The St Clair district clearly appealed to higher-status occupations and the process of

suburbanisation saw fewer masters living in Caversham township. With the exception of St Clair, however, manual workers dominated all sub-areas, although the number of white-collar men grew and masters remained a sizeable proportion even in 1922.<sup>43</sup> The gender ratio typified New Zealand's urban pattern.

TABLE 2.2  
**Occupational Structure of Sub-areas, 1902-22**

	Township		Rockyside		Kensington		St Clair	
	1902	1922	1902	1922	1902	1922	1902	1922
employers	2.1	2.0	4.4	2.8	2.5	1.2	9.3	12.7
professionals	2.7	3.4	3.7	1.7	2.5	3.3	13.6	11.2
semi-professionals	0.9	1.4	2.9	1.1	0.6	1.2	2.5	3.2
masters	17.1	11.6	8.8	6.1	16.1	14.7	17.3	15.5
officials	3.3	3.6	2.9	2.8	3.2	2.2	5.6	9.2
white-collar	10.4	12.3	15.4	12.8	12.0	9.3	20.4	19.0
skilled	31.1	28.1	34.6	35.6	35.0	37.2	20.4	10.8
semi-skilled	4.7	8.1	3.7	8.3	7.9	6.3	3.7	5.2
unskilled	27.5	22.7	23.6	27.1	20.2	24.0	6.8	5.2
retired	0.2	6.8	-	1.7	-	0.6	0.4	8.0

For the election of 1902, 2,649 adults registered to vote in the Caversham electorate. Just under half of these intending voters were men. Some 494 men (out of 1,316 who registered) and 639 women (out of 1,333 who registered) were married, suggesting that some 20 per cent of the borough's men were away from home, even if only briefly. Over the next twenty years the number of adults registering to vote increased by 50 per cent to 4,092. In that year women outnumbered men, the proportions being 54 per cent and 46 per cent. For most of the period it is impossible with any certainty to identify from the electoral roll the number of married couples, but the proportion of married appears to have risen across the period until by 1922 some 50 per cent of the men and 64.4 per cent of the women were married. Between 25 and 30 per cent of both sexes were single adults, many of them beneath the country's average age of marriage, although during the period dominated by World War I the proportion of single men fell sharply. From 1911 onwards about 9 per cent of all women were widows. The excess of women and the higher proportion of married were typical of Dunedin and urban New Zealand by this date.<sup>44</sup>

Able-bodied men went to work for money, but most of the women in Caversham (like most of the women in New Zealand) married, had children and managed a household. Unmarried women sold their labour, helped their mothers, or ran households for male relations (over the entire period as many people lived in households of relations as lived in marriage). Given that almost all households in Caversham owned or leased a section, women were also heavily involved in running domestic gardens, hens and even the occasional cow. Most married women also had quite large families. In 1901 and 1904, the last year for which the *Census* reported information for Caversham, the borough had the highest crude birth rates and fertility rates in the greater-Dunedin area (followed closely by South Dunedin). Children abounded, suggesting that their parents had a high level of confidence in the future.<sup>45</sup>



*Caversham School, c. 1909, with the chimney of the gasworks in the distance and the eastern end of upper Rockside behind. In this period great stress was placed on Physical Education. Hocken Library.*

The public schools were certainly important. Caversham School had

over 530 pupils by 1903. The Kensington school, which opened in 1871, had over 320 pupils in that year, and there were also schools at St Clair and Forbury. Each school boasted a lively school committee, elected by adult voters, and served as the focus for considerable community pride. After Caversham's amalgamation with the city, a decision which most inhabitants of the township opposed, Caversham School and its gymnasium became a focus for the still lively sense of community identity. Close by, in South Dunedin, there was a school at Macandrew Road, where the children from Caversham went to learn cooking and woodwork, and the Catholics had a primary and a secondary school beside St Patrick's Basilica on Anderson's Bay Road. No secondary school existed on The Flat until King's High School (for boys) opened its doors in 1936, but the Dunedin School of Art and Design (affiliated to the South Kensington School of Art in London in 1894) provided technical training for artisans. The Dunedin Technical Classes Association, established by some of the city's leading manufacturers in 1888, also provided technical classes in several subjects.<sup>[46](#)</sup>



*The Druids (and other friendly societies) joined the procession which marched through the city's streets for the opening of the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition in 1889. These organisations portrayed themselves as custodians of ancient British traditions such as liberty and civic responsibility. Hocken Library.*

The main friendly societies and the freemasons had branches in Caversham. The Manchester Unity Oddfellows, the country's largest society, built its own hall on David Street in 1908. Unity Lodge of the Independent Oddfellows, one of the largest lodges on The Flat, also had its own hall on Cargill Road, near the Wesleyan chapel, and another in Kensington. In 1902, indeed, the Independent Oddfellows opened its first lodge for women on The Flat. The Royal Oak Lodge of the United Ancient Order of Druids, a smaller organisation, had a chapter in Caversham but no

hall in this period. The Saint Andrew's Court of the equally Ancient Order of Foresters had no hall either but, like the Druids, hopped from Edinburgh Castle hotel, which lost its licence in 1894, to the Primitive Methodist hall at Forbury Corner and then to Manchester Unity's new hall in David Street in 1909. The Protestant Alliance Friendly Society met in the Wesleyan Schoolroom until 1909 and then in the IOOF's new hall. The Independent Order of Rechabites, a pro-temperance organisation, also boasted its own lodge, 'Star of the South'. At the other end of The Flat, although not formed until 1914, the Hibernians met in St Patrick's hall. With eight societies, the Hillside Workshops' Sick Benefit Society and two unions which operated benefit schemes for men in the building and metal-working trades, the good citizens of Caversham were well served (as Table 2.3 makes clear). Although a couple of small lodges existed in South Dunedin, it is striking that so many met in Caversham and Kensington.<sup>47</sup>

TABLE 2.3  
**Membership of Friendly Societies, 1882–1922\***

	MUIOOF	AOF	Druids	IOOF	PAFSA	Hillside	Total
1884	29	85	-	23	-	222	359
1894	89	119	72	95	73	134	582
1902	183	141	113	154	141	192	924?
1911	313	163	185	310	141	250	1362
1922	323	179	179	412	158	332	1583

\* Figures for the friendly societies are from the *AJHR* and those for Hillside are from the same source for the first two years, and probably include others, but the later figures are from the *New Zealand Railway Review*. As no copy of the 1902 volume could be found I have halved the growth between 1894 and 1911.

*Abbreviations:* MUIOOF Manchester Unity Oddfellows; AOF Ancient Order of Foresters; IOOF Independent Oddfellows; PAFSA Protestant Alliance Friendly Society of Australasia

All the societies provided a range of benefits, mainly for funerals and temporary incapacities, but they also lent money for buying houses and expanding businesses. Robert Rutherford, for instance, borrowed £700 from the Caversham Lodge to expand the Wax Vesta factory.<sup>48</sup> Hiram Lodge of the Freemasons, New Zealand Constitution (after a protracted struggle), was not a benefit society as such, but its members practised 'charitable

works' towards other members, their families, and widows and orphans generally. During lean years such works took up most of their meeting time.<sup>49</sup> The freemasons, like the other societies, also organised 'cricket matches, card tournaments, musical evenings, official visits etc ...', both to recruit new members and to sustain 'a healthy, brotherly feeling.' 'Conviviality' and zany practical jokes, lubricated by Speights and other alcoholic beverages, occupied many meetings. In the 1890s younger members in all the lodges demanded debates, dances and musical evenings. Early in the new century a mania for card games and dances swept the lodges. The lodges also increasingly organised classes. In the 1900s, for instance, Unity organised elocution and boxing classes. Members also listened to educational papers on such topics as 'Health in Our Homes', 'Constitutional Government in Ancient Greece', and 'The Early Days of Caversham Lodge'. They also heard papers on novelists and poets such as Charles Dickens and Thomas Hood (whose 'Song of the Shirt' embodied the popular revulsion against 'sweating').<sup>50</sup>

Friendly societies in Dunedin were concentrated overwhelmingly in working-class areas but, within those areas, men of all social classes joined. In the late nineteenth century, at least, people referred to Unity Lodge of the IOOF as 'the workingman's club', although its leading members, such as J. H. Hancock and T. Cole, grocer and undertaker respectively, owned substantial businesses.<sup>51</sup> Whereas lodges with many branches were dominated by men who lived nearby, the smaller ones, and even Unity Lodge, attracted members from adjacent suburbs. So too did Hiram Lodge of the freemasons. As Table 2.4 reveals, however, working men and masters dominated all lodges, although white-collar men and professionals also joined in roughly the proportions one might expect. The freemasons did not differ although they clearly had more appeal to employers, masters, professionals and men in white-collar jobs. Such men spent much of their time on good works, but presumably disliked 'conviviality' or did not want this form of insurance.<sup>52</sup> Interestingly enough, the lodges broadly reflected the occupational profile of the area. Although the balance varied, all of them, including the masons, recruited from all occupational groups.

TABLE 2.4

## Occupational Profile of Friendly Societies\*

	MUIOOF	Druids	IOOF	Miriam	Hiram
employers	-	0.7	0.25	-	9.0
professional	2.0	2.8	1.3	0.7	7.9
white-collar	3.4	5.6	13.1	21.3	22.0
masters	3.9	12.0	11.9	-	22.6
skilled	43.1	21.1	28.8	40.4	22.6
semi-skilled	14.7	9.9	11.6	11.4	6.2
unskilled	4.9	13.4	24.2	24.8	9.6
unknown	28.0	34.5	8.8	1.4	0.1**

\* The MU figures are based on only 102 members from the period who survived into the 1960s and one-quarter of the skilled men may have been masters; the Druids figure is derived from the membership records for the West Harbour Branch; the Miriam women's lodge is based on 144 members; the IOOF's Unity Lodge is based on 1203 members; and Hiram's on 177 members.

\*\* Analysis of aggregate transience indicates that the occupational profile would not be altered if more information was available.

The churches also helped to give Caversham both a character and a sense of community. Perhaps because English immigrants formed a higher proportion of Caversham's population than was generally true in Dunedin, the Anglicans opened the first church, St Peter's, in 1864, at the corner of Eastbourne Street and Cargill Road. The first Presbyterian church opened only in 1869 and the Baptists and Methodists came close behind. Caversham's Baptists boasted their own church as early as 1870. The congregation later split, resulting in the construction of a second Baptist church in Playfair Street, but the two groups reunited in 1895. In 1907 they opened a commodious brick church on the Main South Road and a small congregation of Brethren took over the chapel in Playfair Street. The Primitive Methodists built a small wooden church at Forbury Corner in 1876 and replaced it with a large brick building in 1903. The largest Wesleyan circuit in Otago had its headquarters in Cargill Road, and opened

a new church in 1894 which seated 600 persons.<sup>53</sup> Caversham's Wesleyans also opened their own church and Sunday school in 1908, in the old Caversham Hall (by 1914 they had built new premises on the site). In 1912 the Primitives and the Wesleyans united and Edward Drake, the Primitive minister and the local scourge of gamblers, moved on.<sup>54</sup> The fact that the superintending Methodist minister, the Reverend Josiah Ward, had been a Primitive minister until 1885, while his father had been the first Primitive minister to settle in the colony, made reunification easy.<sup>55</sup> In St Clair the Congregationalists built a 'pretty little wooden church' which could seat 250 worshippers.<sup>56</sup> The Presbyterians had less strength on The Flat than they did in other parts of the city, but had a church and a Sunday school in Marion Street. Daniel Dutton, the minister in Caversham from 1888 until 1922, had served as chaplain with the South Island battalion in South Africa. Following a vigorous public campaign a reluctant government appointed him chaplain again in 1915, for he was now sixty-six years old, but refused to let him near the front. Dutton, a native of Staffordshire, had also been brought up as a Primitive Methodist and enjoyed a considerable reputation within Otago as a lecturer on scientific topics. In 1921 he became the first English-born moderator of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>57</sup> In 1909 the Presbyterians also opened a church in St Clair. Although first to arrive, the Anglicans still had only one church forty years later, a new one built in 1882. The Catholics, by contrast, had a formidable presence in South Dunedin, boasting the impressive St Patrick's Basilica, a school (with a roll of 300), a St Vincent de Paul orphanage and a convent run by the Sisters of Mercy. Only in 1919 did they begin holding services in Caversham (they borrowed the Oddfellows' hall).<sup>58</sup>



*Daniel Dutton came to the colony in 1886 to work for the Methodist church. He later became a Presbyterian, and worked with Rutherford Waddell. In 1888 he was called to Caversham and served as minister until his retirement in 1922. He was widely admired and loved, not only for his learning and courage, but because of his geniality and tolerance. Knox College.*

A relatively small proportion of the total population regularly attended church although, between them, Caversham's Protestant churches could seat about 2,000 people. Most parents sent their children to Sunday school and by 1900 the Protestant clergy turned up at Caversham School each Friday morning to take religious instruction.<sup>59</sup> Except for the Anglicans, each Protestant church boasted a large Sunday-school building and a large roll. Nor did Sunday schools confine themselves to biblical instruction. The Congregationalist Sunday school taught 105 pupils bookkeeping, wood-carving and shorthand, besides literary and Bible instruction.<sup>60</sup> The Bible Class movement for older youths had more trouble recruiting members, because most teenagers had left school. In an effort to attract members many of them maintained sporting teams, some of which affiliated with non-church clubs on condition that they could retain their identity and autonomy.<sup>61</sup> The St Clair Congregationalists even ran a gymnasium. The

South Dunedin Presbyterians debated forming a Physical Culture Club, but had insufficient space. And some found the raw material wanting. One visiting missionary informed the somewhat disheartened Bible Class teachers that the local children were less respectful and more irreverent than the 'heathen' in India.<sup>62</sup>

Detailed analyses of church membership indicate that white-collar, self-employed, small employers and skilled workers dominated the male membership of all Protestant congregations. Skilled workers were more conspicuous in the Baptist and Primitive Methodist congregations than in the others, and white-collar professional men were more common in the Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican churches than in the Baptist, but there was not much in it. Such a profile, of course, is based on male membership but women dominated all Protestant congregations (numerically). The churches helped to define the standards of behaviour appropriate to private and public life. It is significant, therefore, to note the virtual absence of the 'unskilled' from all Protestant churches.<sup>63</sup>

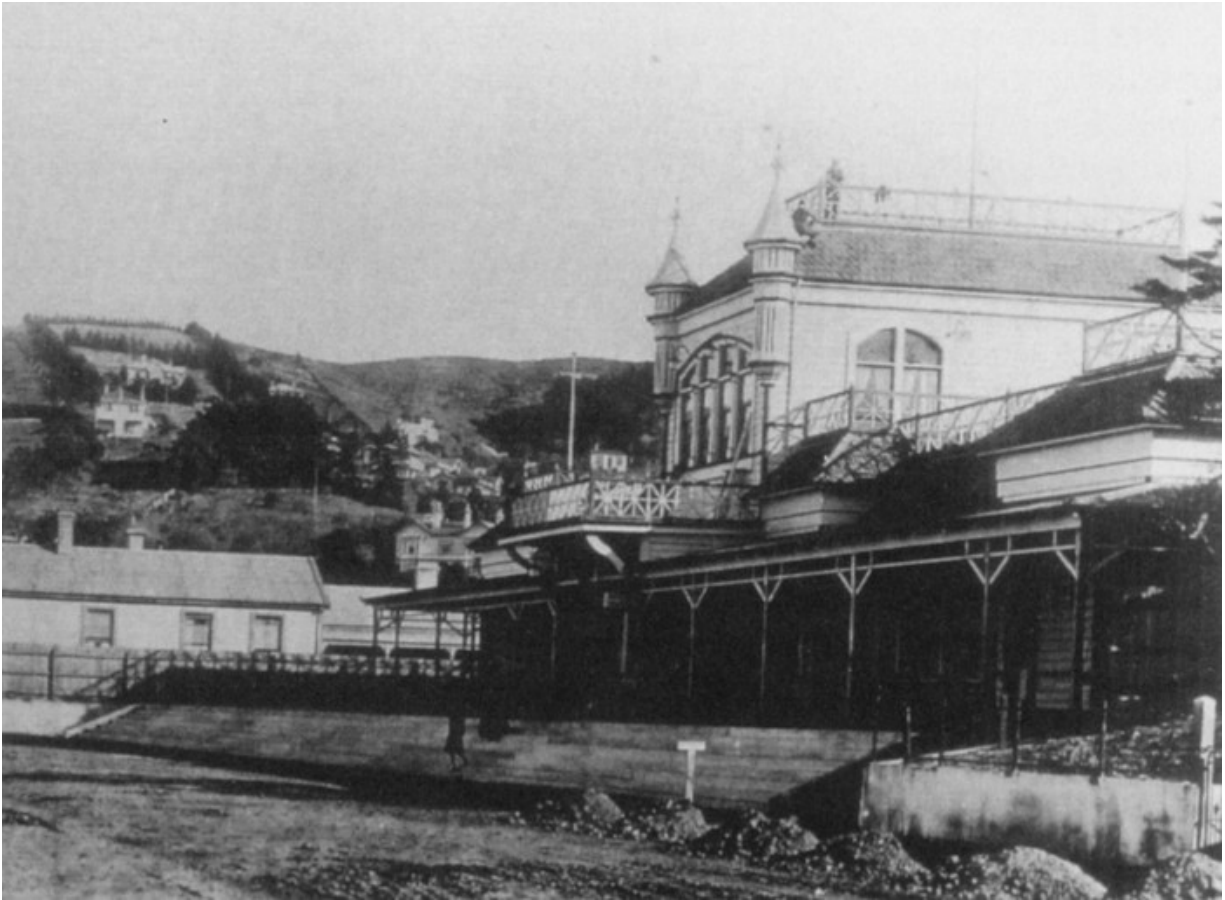
This absence deeply concerned many Protestants, especially once the Salvation Army established its vigorous presence in South Dunedin. The Army's annual 'Self Denial Appeal' on behalf of the 'unfortunate', not to mention the home for 'fallen women' in Rockside, kept the issue alive. Methodists and Baptists had their British origins in an earlier campaign to save the godless through popular evangelism, but they responded slowly as new issues emerged. The Congregationalist obsession with orphans now seemed less relevant than the Army's robust good works. Boys' Brigade, which started as a movement to 'save' the godless youth of Glasgow's slums, retained its original ethos when Horace Grocott founded the Caversham branch and the national movement in 1926. The Grocotts founded Girls' Brigade two years later.<sup>64</sup> Canon King, if only because of his son's links with East London and the 'social gospel', had a strong interest in Christian outreach. His church ran a kindergarten which had three teachers and eighty pupils by 1907.<sup>65</sup> In 1909 King's son established the first Anglican mission in the inner city, but various organisations kept inviting him back as a speaker on social issues.<sup>66</sup> The Presbyterians of Caversham opened a kindergarten in their church hall in 1908. In the same year the South Dunedin Presbyterians, led by Robert Mackie, a native of rural

Otago, hired deaconesses to spearhead an attempt to revitalise the faith of their lost sheep and succour the poor and the sick.

One of the deaconesses, Mabel Cartwright, a young woman from the Strath Taieri, kept a diary which affords a glimpse of 'working-class' life on The Flat. She quickly remarked that most working men 'have comfortable homes & appear prosperous'. The 'poor' tended to be old, alone and without children, although they usually owned their own homes and had enough land to have a garden and even a few hens. 'The old age pension is a help to many' The 'Assyrians' of Glasgow Street, South Dunedin, shocked her most, but mainly because their children played in the gutters.<sup>67</sup> She found deserted or widowed mothers with dependent children the worst off. Some of them, to her annoyance, often reeked of alcohol and lied with great aplomb in the quest for coal, food or clothes. Not all did so. She reported visiting Mrs B: 'She has 9 [children]. 4 able to work & 5 at home. Husb[and] dead 3 years. She washes to keep home but has bad knee. Ready to take help without any bother.'<sup>68</sup> Ill-health, disability and addiction to alcohol also contributed to poverty. The various parishes grappled with the problems by providing charitable assistance, supporting an orphanage and crusading for prohibition. From 1908 onwards these Christian social workers also co-operated with Dr Frederick Truby King's campaign to 'Save the Babies'. Among Catholics, the Sisters of Mercy spearheaded social work among the poor.

The Protestant churches co-operated in their attempt to preach temperance and prohibition. This moral crusade preoccupied the Wesleyans, the Primitives, the Baptists and the Salvation Army (which ran a fortnightly service in the Benevolent). Although older Presbyterians still liked their whisky, as old John McIndoe did, the Caversham church gave increasing support to the crusade. The tipplers were marooned with their guilt.<sup>69</sup> Gospel temperance meetings, processions and mothers' meetings figured large. A branch of the Band of Hope, a temperance organisation, met frequently. Thanks largely to the Salvation Army, outdoor evangelism became the order of the day. The poll on licensing day, when the locals could vote to close all hotels or reduce their numbers, saw the evangelicals redouble their efforts to redeem Caversham and The Flat for Christ and prohibition. The 'Blue Ribbon' became their emblem, the pubs their target

and by 1911 'Strike out the top line' had become their battle cry.<sup>70</sup>



*The new pavilion at St Clair attracted a lot of attention when it was built in 1912. Its destruction by fire in May 1915, days after leading citizens organised a 'May Day Carnival' to aid the Belgians, attracted much more. Fire brigades from the city and St Kilda arrived too late to save the Pavilion but worked through the night to protect neighbouring homes. There was, according to the Times, widespread satisfaction that the building had been well insured and that 'it made a jolly good fire'. Hocken Library.*

The citizens of Caversham also established a network of other organisations besides friendly societies and churches. The Volunteer Fire Brigade and the southern District Rifles began in the early 1860s. The latter appears to have faded away with the Russian war scare and the construction of the fort just south of St Clair beach. In 1902, inspired by the Boer War, local enthusiasts formed a Volunteer Rifle Corps. The fire brigade, taken over by the city in 1907, only disbanded in 1917. Fires were common and the weekly practises in Playfair Street attracted an admiring audience, as did most fires.<sup>71</sup> Sporting organisations flourished in the next forty years. By 1900 Caversham boasted a gymnastic club, a harriers club (a second

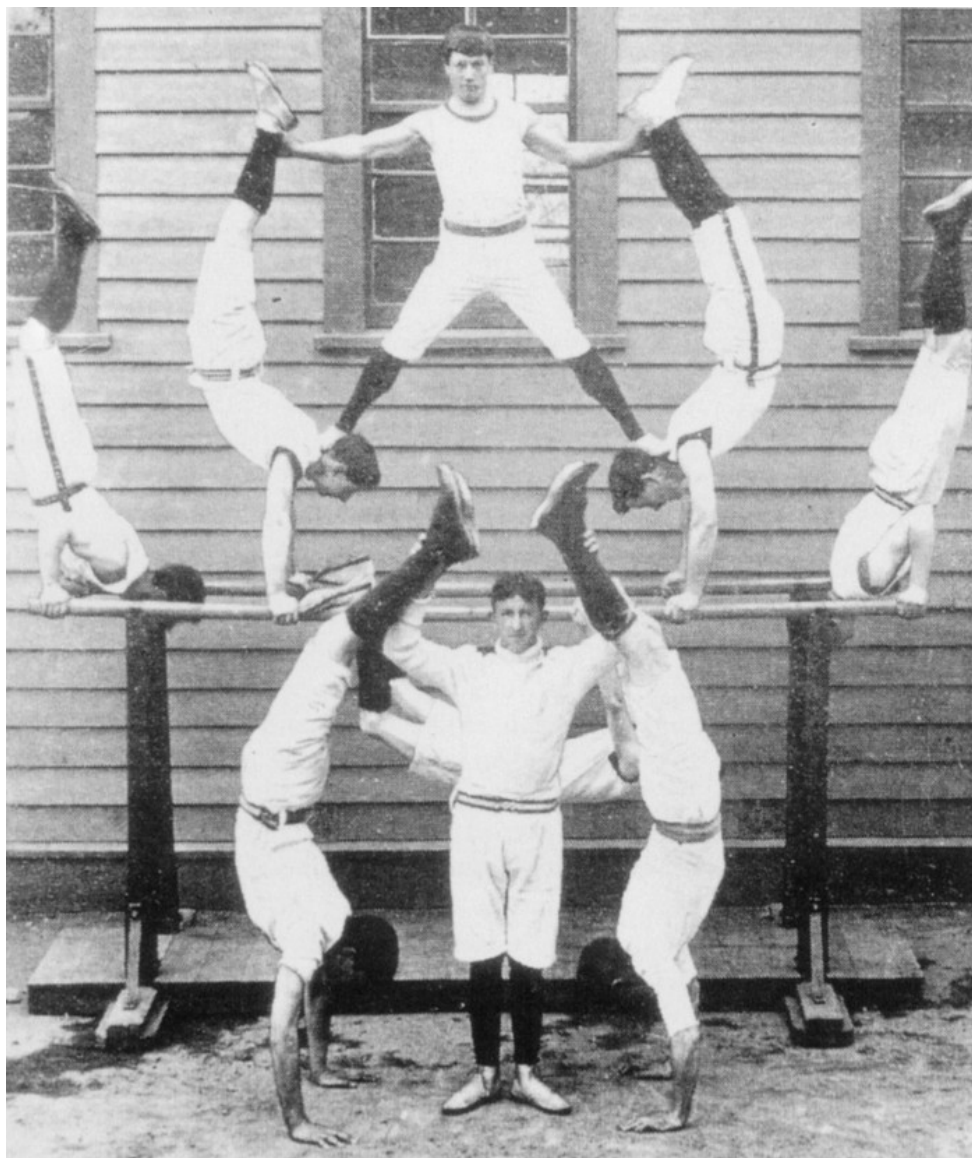
one, Pacific Harriers, formed in 1909, based in Kensington), a cricket club, a soccer club, a bowling club (which opened a new green and clubhouse in 1906) and a rugby club (although the latter merged with its neighbour in South Dunedin to form Southern in 1905). All had large memberships and did well, although sports dominated by young men suffered severely during World War I. St Clair boasted its own lawn tennis club, a golf club and a croquet club. In 1910 the St Clair Life Saving and Surf Bathing Club was established (the borough had constructed the St Clair salt-water baths in 1884).<sup>72</sup> Carisbrook was the home to another cricket club, but it jealously guarded its elite social status and enjoyed little community support. Even T. K. Sidey, MHR for much of The Flat from 1901 until 1928 and a member or patron of almost every voluntary organisation in Caversham, never held any position in the Carisbrook Club or any of the sports clubs in St Clair.<sup>73</sup> As St Kilda grew it also spawned many sporting clubs. So too did the Hillside workshops, especially after the war. Some of the city's main sporting venues—Carisbrook, the Caledonian, Forbury and Tahuna Parks—also lay within or just outside the borough. The two parks boasted trotting clubs, the first formed in 1891 and the second in 1902. Trotting enjoyed considerable support on The Flat. So did hare coursing (a sport which involved thoroughbred greyhounds trying to run down and kill hares).<sup>74</sup>

If the health of the body and the health of the soul commanded considerable support, the health of the mind also had devotees. The Caversham Mutual Improvement Association met monthly in Caversham School throughout the late nineteenth century.<sup>75</sup> The Caversham Brass Band, founded in 1903, two Literary and Debating Societies (one based in Caversham township and the other on Cargill Road), the South Dunedin branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a South Dunedin Temperance Council and (in the 1890s) the Knights of Labour all met regularly. Besides this density of organisations for mutual improvement and entertainment, the various churches and lodges had their own debating societies and book-reading clubs.

The journeymen and masters had a keen interest in knowledge, particularly applied science, and a strong belief in self-improvement. They rejoiced in the public schools. Caversham borough had its own library which had 3,000 volumes by 1909, when it became part of the new Dunedin

Public Library.<sup>76</sup> The bookshops and newsagents on Hillside Road and the Main South Road, such as the two owned by Alex Sligo, advertised a wide range of technical and scientific journals. By 1910 they also sold phonographic records.<sup>77</sup> The workshops had a library of technical books and journals which boasted 15,000 volumes and subscribed to thirty journals by 1928. R. Farrant of Forbury Road, a blacksmith at Hillside and the long-serving secretary to the Rechabites, provided much of the drive behind this library.<sup>78</sup> In general the skilled men who dominated Caversham believed passionately in education and self-improvement. Knowledge empowered and lent support to independence.<sup>79</sup>

Whenever men and women wished to accomplish any purpose in Caversham they banded together, chose someone to occupy the chair, elected officers and committee members, and adopted a simple set of rules. They formed committees and organisations with remarkable ease. Most fundraising was democratic, a strong tradition among Presbyterians, Baptists, Catholics and the variegated Wesleyans. Voluntarism had no prophet or champion in Caversham because its egalitarian ethos permeated the society. That ethos reflected both a powerful democratic tradition, with its faith in the goodness and reasonableness of all men and women, and the belief that men and women were social beings who could only realise their full humanity by living and co-operating with others. 'It is only civilized beings who can combine', J. S. Mill wrote in his essay on 'Civilization'. Most people in Caversham would have agreed. The democracy of chapel, kirk, lodge and union taught the dignity, equality and independence of labour, and that master and man belonged to a moral community.<sup>80</sup>



*Gymnastics became enormously popular around 1910. It is not known how long the Caversham Gymnastics Club spent posing for this photograph outside the gymnasium at Caversham School. Hocken Library.*

The borough council did not differ in essence from the dense network of voluntary organisations. Before amalgamating with Dunedin in 1905, the local council, elected by the ratepayers, dealt with such public matters as roads, drainage, water supply and street lighting. Successful men, most of them masters, dominated the council, but there is no evidence that anyone objected.<sup>81</sup> Most ratepayers knew their local councillors. Most also knew the town clerk, Martin Pearce, a veteran of the New Zealand wars who had migrated from Kent at the age of eighteen. He had to enforce the borough's

myriad by-laws. Even after amalgamating with Dunedin, several men prominent in Caversham before that date went on to become important city councillors as representatives of Caversham. Such figures as J. W. Wilson, blind-manufacturer and Grand Master of Manchester Unity, or T. Cole, undertaker and Grand Master of the Odd-fellows, served the community for many years and enjoyed widespread respect.

### III

The cohesion of the community and its egalitarian ethos rested not only upon shared values and experiences but the presence of some thirty Chinese men, some of whom lived just above Caversham township while the others lived at Forbury. Although most worked on the market gardens, a few had found entrepreneurial niches in The Flat's economy. Two of the Choo Quee brothers ran a fruiterer's shop on the Main South Road and another, who lived in St Kilda by 1906, was a builder. One of his carpenters, Cheng Chuen, died in the Benevolent in 1905.<sup>82</sup> Charles On Lee ran a laundry on Cargill Road and Jimmy Ching Sing ran one on the Main South Road. In 1906 the Department of Labour complained that 'Chinese laundries appear to have gained an undesirably secure footing' (there were twenty-three in Dunedin).<sup>83</sup> The local whites might concede that these other immigrants were clean, hard-working and thrifty, but they also saw them as part of a larger threat, a sort of fifth column, menacing their own vision of a new society. In 1900 the Chinese were generally perceived as dirty, immoral, far too ready to work too hard for too little and too prone to send money home to China. Their skin colour, their strange clothes and pigtails made them look alien. They were, in short, the 'other'.<sup>84</sup> Until the war, larrikins tormented and harassed the Chinese from time to time, but in general the dominant community did not subject this tiny minority to overt violence. A wall of prejudice kept the Chinese in their place. As it became clear that they accepted this, conflict and tension faded.<sup>85</sup>

Although insignificant in numbers and socially peripheral, the Chinese were in some ways symbolically central. But for the street directories, there would be scarcely any evidence that they had lived in the area. To contemporaries, their market gardens, including fifty acres at Forbury and

about four acres at the bottom of Caversham Valley, made them conspicuous. These gardens, rented at £12 an acre from the Shiel brothers or John McIndoe, who gave up his father's farm to become a printer, may have become the focus for resentment as land values rose sharply in the early twentieth century.<sup>86</sup> In 1907 a deputation from the Benevolent Institution's trustees urged the government to assist in repatriating aged and destitute Chinese, complaining that fifteen were inmates in 'the Benny' and another seventy-four were receiving aid (James Fong Lee's success in converting many to Catholicism may have fuelled the flames). James Arnold, a Liberal-Labour MHR, summed up community opinion when he claimed 'It would be a kindness to them and a [financial] relief to the colony' if the government sent them back to China.<sup>87</sup> As scapegoats the Chinese reduced the incipient tensions between skilled and unskilled, Protestant and Catholic, rough and respectable.<sup>88</sup>

The presence of a small Chinese community in Caversham—part of a larger but fast-shrinking Dunedin and Otago community—reduced the significance of social inequality among whites but did not remove it entirely. Gender and skill remained important sources of inequality. By and large, however, Caversham lacked any large concentrations of unskilled men. Those that lived in the area worked with skilled men, mixed with them in some social organisations and sent their children to the same schools. Only the Irish Catholics kept themselves apart, but their leading laymen, the Shiels and the architect, F. W. Petre, commanded widespread respect.<sup>89</sup> In Kensington and parts of South Dunedin, however, the balance tilted towards those who had a struggle to maintain economic independence and respectability: those dependent on the earnings of a disabled man, widows, deserted wives and old people ineligible for a pension. Many of them took refuge in alcohol. The urban environment provided metaphors for the final stages of moral degradation, the 'gutter' and the 'sewer'. Apart from drunks sleeping off the effects in paddocks and alleys, Caversham had stark reminders of the fate awaiting those who strayed too far: the Salvation Army's home for 'fallen girls' in Rockside, the imposing 'Benny', whose old and often drunken inmates could frequently be seen on the streets, and the Industrial School for delinquents. Janet Frame records her father's threat, as the express stopped at Caversham, that she would end up in the

Industrial School if she stole. ‘It was Dad’s favourite threat to Myrtle, too, when she was disobedient.’<sup>90</sup>



*In 1888, when Alfred Burton took this photograph, St Clair beach and the salt-water pool symbolised leisure, freedom and pleasure. Museum of New Zealand.*

## IV

Caversham emerged from frontier to suburb within the space of forty years. It not only provided work, housing, churches, schools and various forms of organised entertainment, but the paddocks to the south allowed everybody a large measure of physical freedom. Men and boys headed south to the Kaikorai estuary or the seaside resort of Brighton for a day’s fishing. Many boys preferred the harbour, which lapped Anderson’s Bay Road, where they pelted octopuses with stones or fooled about. In summer, by 1900, children and adults thronged the beaches on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, The Flat’s now ‘traditional’ half holidays, and the children went bare-footed. In Caversham, as Arthur Adams noted, ‘dress did not matter so much’, at least once you left the railway station.<sup>91</sup> Freedom and work were vividly contained in almost any landscape or townscape one chose to look at. Freedom and work were also central in most of the factories and workplaces. It is to these that we must now turn to reconstruct the world of

skilled journeymen and masters.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Moshe Semyonov, 'Bi-ethnic Labor Markets, Mono-ethnic Labor Markets, and Socioeconomic Inequality', *American Sociological Review*, v. 53 (April 1988), p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> British historians of labour have begun to recognise the importance of local communities in complicating what were once thought of as the unvarying social relations of capitalism; see Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, 3 vols, Oxford, 1986; and Joyce, *Visions*, ch. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Alma Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town: Historic Caversham as Seen Through its Streets and Buildings*, Dunedin, 1978, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> K. C. McDonald, *City of Dunedin: A Century of Civic Enterprise*, Dunedin, 1968, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> Reed, *Place Names of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1975, p. 92 and, for the prominent early settlers, Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, pp. 22–23.

<sup>6</sup> Olssen, *A History of Otago*, Dunedin, 1984, pp. 37–38 and Fr. P. E. Mee, *The Turn of the Tide: A "Historette" to the Establishment of St. Bernadette's Parish, Forbury, Dunedin*, [Dunedin, 1977], pp. 5–7.

<sup>7</sup> *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand: Industrial, Descriptive, Historical, Biographical ...*, v. 4, *Otago and Southland Provincial Districts*, Christchurch, 1905, pp. 148–50 (all future references are to v. 4); Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, pp. 15–17; Olssen, *Otago*, pp. 85, 87–88; P. T. Verstappen, 'The Benevolent Institution and the Provision of Charitable Aid in Otago, 1890–1920', 452 class essay, University of Otago (hereafter OU), 1979 (all 452 essays cited are held by the Hocken Library); and for the national system, Margaret Tennant, *Paupers and Providers: Charitable Aid in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> G. Stedman, 'The South Dunedin Flat: A Study in Urbanisation, 1849–1965', MA thesis, OU, 1966, pp. 89–90.

<sup>9</sup> McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 139–40. Stedman, *ibid.*, pp. 76–77 discusses the Caversham Road Board's attempt to govern its large domain.

<sup>10</sup> McDonald, *Dunedin*, p. 139. To avoid confusion Caversham will refer to the borough and, after 1905, the suburb, while Caversham township

will be used to refer to that part of the borough centred on Caversham Valley.

[11](#) Tom Brooking, 'Confessions of a Caversham Conspirator: A Report on the State of the Caversham Project', 1982, pp. 32, 57. One resident, born there in 1894, claimed that ethnic tension existed but took the form of English Caversham versus Scottish Dunedin. He thought this underlay the amalgamation debate; see transcript of interview by Helen Brownlie with Frederick George Edison Bell, 1980, part 2, p. 4, OU History Department (all transcripts are held by the History Department).

[12](#) Stedman, 'The Flat', pp. 81–82.

[13](#) It ran out of clay and shut down in 1889; see Rob Calder, "The Bastion of Brickmakers": The Caversham Brick and Pipemaking Industries 1884–1924', 452 class essay, OU, 1982, p. 9. See also E. M. Seed, 'The History of the Brick, Tile, and Pottery Industries in Otago', MA thesis, OU, 1954, pp. 85–101.

[14](#) *Cyclopaedia*, p. 355.

[15](#) *Ibid.*, p. 362 and Kathryn G. Lucas, *A New Twist: A Centennial History of Donaghys Industries Limited*, Dunedin, 1979, pp. 15–16.

[16](#) McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 144–5. Caversham contracted with Hutchison to supply the borough's gas but the debate over whether to join his or Dunedin's gas scheme almost reduced neighbouring South Dunedin to civil war.

[17](#) In order to find space for a foundry they moved the factory to Crawford Street, where several other large foundries were established, but moved back on to The Flat in 1909; *Cyclopaedia*, p. 324 and G. Methven & Co Ltd, *Prospectus*, Dunedin 1930, p. 7. Unless otherwise indicated information about people, firms and addresses is from *Stone's Directory*.

[18](#) *Cyclopaedia*, p. 410 and Tony Bamford, 'The Wax Vesta Match Factory', 452 class essay, OU, 1982, pp. 4–6.

[19](#) Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 41 and transcript of an interview between Susan Harkness and C.W. N. Ingram, 1980, part 1, pp. 2–3, History Department, OU. Ingram sold the drink factory in 1914 and became an agent for theatrical companies.

[20](#) Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 47 and Ruby Lyons (née Bathgate), 'Reminiscences', p. 34 (I am grateful to George Griffiths for lending me this document).

[21](#) Transcript of Harkness interview with Ingram, part 3, pp. 24–25 for the township and Lyons, ‘Reminiscences’, p. 31 for McCracken. M. Henderson, ‘The Pubs and Breweries of Caversham’, 452 class essay, OU, 1981, traced all hotelkeepers through the *Directory*.

[22](#) Lucy Duncan, ‘Hillside Railway Workshops, 1875–1920’, 452 class essay, OU, 1982 and above, p. 124–5.

[23](#) Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, pp. [32–33].

[24](#) *Typo*, 31 May 1890, p. 56.

[25](#) For Dunedin’s epidemics see McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 169, 174, 194.

[26](#) For the densities see *ibid.*, p. 247. The contrast is exaggerated by virtue of the number of farms and market gardens in Caversham borough.

[27](#) For Thorn, see Harkness interview with Ingram, part 2, p. 24 and for Hewton, see Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, p. 27.

[28](#) *Census*, 1901, pp. 22–23; Stedman, ‘The Flat’, pp. 124–50; and W. A. V. Clark, ‘Dunedin in 1901’, MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1961, pp. 94–95. Clark distinguished different residential areas in Dunedin on the basis of population density, the value of housing, the size of houses, the materials used to make the houses, access to amenities, and the occupation of inhabitants.

[29](#) Interview with Ingram, part 2, p. 27.

[30](#) *Directory*, 1900, p. 274 and transcript of my interview with Robert Rutherford, 17 July 1980, p. 4. Mr Cardno was a seaman and sail-maker. *Stone’s Directory*, interestingly, listed only Mrs Mary Simpson as a registered midwife.

[31](#) *New Zealand Scenery and Public Buildings*, Dunedin, 1895, p. 57 waxed lyrical over St Clair’s ‘bizarre villas, its noted gardens,’ and provided detailed descriptions of the more notable. For the quotation see Clark, ‘Dunedin in 1901’, p. 93.

[32](#) *Illustrated New Zealand News*, 9 Sept., 1883, p. 7.

[33](#) It actually closed after one month but others followed: Knewstubs Theatres, *Theatres, Cinemas: Dunedin and Districts, 1897–1974*, Dunedin, 1974, pp. 14–15.

[34](#) Transcript of an interview between Adair Bruorton and Miss G. J. Shiel, 29 May 1980, p. 21 (Miss Shiel then lived on Josephine Street).

[35](#) Transcript of Harkness interview with Ingram, p. 26.

[36](#) Clark, ‘Dunedin in 1901’, p. 91.

[37](#) Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 6.

[38](#) McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 199–202, discusses the history of this board and the St Clair esplanade in the late nineteenth century. See also p. 254.

[39](#) Caversham Borough Incorporation Act, 1880, No. 19 (Local) authorised union by ballot, but nobody ever moved to use the provision; McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 192–4.

[40](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 248–9 and Gavin McLean, “‘A Marriage of Convenience’: The Amalgamation of Caversham with Dunedin City”, 452 class essay, OU, 1980, p. 6.

[41](#) Louise Vickerman, ‘A Study of Caversham Civil Marriage Registers’, 452 class essay, OU, 1981, p. 1.

[42](#) See Olssen, ‘Towards a New Society, in Geoffrey Rice, W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd ed., Wellington, 1992, pp. 272–4.

[43](#) Judi Boyd, David Thomson and Dick Martin, ‘Caversham 1902–1922: A Preliminary Statistical Survey ...’, Caversham Project working paper, 1992, provides the evidence for occupational distributions.

[44](#) See Olssen, ‘Women, Work and Family, 1880–1926’, in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, Auckland, 1980, pp. 159–83 and Brooking, ‘Confessions’, pp. 31–35.

[45](#) Brooking, ‘Confessions’, pp. [36–37].

[46](#) See *Caversham School, Sixty-fifth Anniversary Celebrations, 1861–1926*, Dunedin, [1926] and Stuart C. Scott, *The First Tree in the Forest: A History of Technical Education in Otago 1850–1991*, Invercargill, 1991, pp. 20–21, 39–41.

[47](#) Olssen, ‘Friendly Societies in New Zealand, 1840–1990’, paper presented to Collôque International sur l’Histoire de la Mutualité, Paris, 1992, develops a case study of The Flat’s societies in more detail. The unions were the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

[48](#) Bamford, ‘Wax Vesta Factory’, p. 6. His son, Robert W. Rutherford, was a partner and became manager on his father’s death in 1904.

[49](#) J. Wyllie, *Hiram Lodge, No. 46, New Zealand Constitution. Centennial History, 1883–1983*, Dunedin, 1983.

[50](#) *Rise and Progress of the Loyal Caversham Lodge*, Dunedin, 1906, pp. 23, 28; W. Goodall, ‘The Oddfellows’, 452 class essay, OU, 1981, Table 2,

p. 14; the Minute Books and Miscellaneous records of Unity Lodge, Glasgow Street; and for the opening of the new hall, *ODT*, 9 Dec. 1907, Sidey MSS, 605/13, Hocken Library.

[51](#) 'Earlier Days of Odd Fellowship in Dunedin', IOOF Unity Lodge no. 16 MSS, IOOF, Glasgow St (probably written by M.B. Feil, an employee of Hancock's).

[52](#) J. Wyllie, *Hiram Lodge*.

[53](#) William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1900, pp. 480–1; I have drawn on the following booklets: *Seventy-five Years of Service: A Survey of Methodism at Kew and Caversham, 1876–1951*, Dunedin, 1951; Caversham Presbyterian Church, *Jubilee Souvenir, 1924: A Brief History of the Church ...*, Dunedin, 1924; Arthur B. Pywell, *1882–1942: The Story of St Peter's Church ...*, Dunedin, 1942; and Annette Turvey, *St. Peter the Less, St Clair, ...*, Dunedin, [197?].

[54](#) Drake to Sidey, 11 July 1910, Sidey MSS, 605/14.

[55](#) *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 186–7.

[56](#) *Cyclopaedia*, p. 188.

[57](#) *Ibid.*, p. 178; his obituary in *Otago Witness*, 1 Sept. 1931, p. 21; and David Bell, 'The Impact of Nineteenth Century Science and Biblical Criticism on Expressions of Faith and Theology, with Especial Reference to the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand', Ph.D. thesis, OU, 1992, pp. 146–8.

[58](#) Mee, *The Turn of the Tide*, pp. 17–21, 24–33.

[59](#) All those interviewed had to attend Sunday school although in most cases their parents never attended church.

[60](#) *Cyclopaedia*, p. 188. The Methodists and then the Dutch Reformed Church later used this building.

[61](#) See *ODT*, 19 March 1907, Sidey MSS, 605/3.

[62](#) Mabel Cartwright, 'Diary', Tuesday [n.d.] March 1908. I am grateful to Yvonne Robertson for lending me this valuable document.

[63](#) These remarks are based on several 452 class essays which are summarised in Brooking, 'Confessions...', pp. 55–59.

[64](#) Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, p. [13].

[65](#) *Evening Star*, 18 Dec. 1907, Sidey MSS 605/3.

[66](#) Melville Harcourt, *A Parson in Prison*, Auckland, 1944, p. 32; W. P. Morrell, *The Anglican Church in New Zealand*, Dunedin, 1973, p. 130; and

John H. Evans, *Southern See*, Dunedin, 1968, p. 168.

[67](#) Entries for 20 Dec. 1907, 8 and 11 Jan. 1908.

[68](#) *Ibid.*, 14 Jan. 1908.

[69](#) Leonard Mosley, *Faces from the Fire: The Biography of Sir Archibald McIndoe*, London, 1962, p. 15. Several of those interviewed, although not asked about drunkenness or prohibition, recalled both; see, for instance, the transcript of my interview with Mr Bert Grimmett, 24 April 1993, p. 8, History Department, OU.

[70](#) See Olssen, *Otago*, pp. 140–6.

[71](#) Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 30 and Lyons, ‘Reminiscences’, p. 41.

[72](#) For the baths, McDonald, *Dunedin*, p. 174.

[73](#) George Griffiths, ‘A History of Cricket in the South’ (kindly lent by the author). Evidence for most clubs is from the Sidey MSS and *Directory*, 1900–25.

[74](#) Harkness interview with Ingram, p. 16, for harecoursing.

[75](#) *Directory*, 1885, p. 324 and *The Sayings and Doings of the Caversham Debating Society*, Dunedin, 1891.

[76](#) In return for this, Caversham was to have first claim when any branch libraries were opened in the suburbs, but the times were never propitious; McDonald, *Dunedin*, p. 285.

[77](#) RR, 26 Aug. 1910, p. 363.

[78](#) *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 2 July 1928, pp. 50–51 and 1 Aug. 1928, pp. 44–45. *Railway Review* also published a record of each annual general meeting; see for instance 21 Aug. 1908, p. 21 and 27 Aug. 1909, p. 281.

[79](#) These values were profoundly shaped by the subculture of skill in England and Scotland; see D. E. G. Plowman, W. E. Minchinton and Margaret Stacey, ‘Local Social Status in England and Wales’, *Sociological Review*, v.10 (1962), pp. 161–202 and j. Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth Century London*, Folkestone, 1979.

[80](#) Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 78–80; for the quotation from Mill’s essay see *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, v. 18, *Essays on Politics and Society*, ed. J. M. Robson, Toronto, 1977, p. 122; and for the concluding thought, Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: The culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England*, London, 1980, pp. 177–8.

[81](#) *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 408–9.

[82](#) Register of Deaths, 4 Nov. 1905.

[83](#) ‘Report of the Department of Labour’, *AJHR*, 1906, H–11, p. iii and transcript of Melissa Reid’s interview with Mr Robert Murray, 5 Aug. 1981, p. 8, History Department, OU.

[84](#) There is a small literature on this subject but I found especially useful Peter Stalleybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London, 1986 and Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London, 1978.

[85](#) The Chinese were too few to pose a threat and the labour market was segregated rather than segmented. There is a vast literature on this issue but see Edna Bonacich, ‘A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market’, *American Sociological Review*, v. 37 (1972), pp. 547–59 and ‘Advanced Capitalism and Black–White Race Relations in the United States: A Split Labor Market Interpretation’, *American Sociological Review*, v. 41 (1976), pp. 34–51 (she sees discrimination and racism as a function of economic threat). See too Moshe Semyonov, D. R. Hoyt and R. I. Scott, ‘Place, Race and Differential Occupational Opportunities’, *Demography*, v. 21 (1984), pp. 259–70 (who argue that the growth in the minority population pushes all members of the majority into higher occupations).

[86](#) Stedman, ‘The Flat’, pp. 131–7.

[87](#) ODT, 14 May 1907, Newspaper Clipping Book, T. K. Sidey MSS, 605/3. For James Lee’s work see Mee, *Turn of the Tide*, p. 36. For the general situation in the city see Susan Chivers, ‘Religion, Ethnicity and Race: The Mission of the Otago Church to the Chinese 1860–1950’, MA thesis, OU, 1992, chs 3 and 4.

[88](#) The sources provide occasional glimpses of popular sectarianism. For instance Mabel Cartwright, the Deaconess, reported one woman she visited ‘wringing her hands and terrified because there were Catholics ... drinking next door’. See ‘Diary’, [28 Jan.] 1908.

[89](#) E. Sinclair, ‘The Catholics of Caversham 1890–1920’, 452 class essay, OU, 1982, Tables 6 and 7.

[90](#) *To the Is-Land: An Autobiography*, London, 1982, p. 52.

[91](#) *Tussock Land: A Romance of New Zealand and the Commonwealth*, London, 1904, p. 95.

## CHAPTER 3

### *The Handicrafts: Masters and Journeymen*

Skilled men dominated Caversham, but men in handicraft trades dominated the ranks of the skilled and helped to ensure that the norms of handicraft production defined the labour process. Under handicraft production, according to Marx, workers owned their own tools, no division of labour existed and one person completed all the work necessary to make a product. It was not quite that simple, for a division of labour existed in many handicraft trades. Regardless of whether a division of labour existed the worker controlled the labour process, knowing how to perform each task and having the skills to do it.<sup>1</sup> Capitalist values structured the handicraft trades in so far as workers sold what they produced and bought what they needed. In urban societies capitalist exchange had been common for centuries, but although industrial and financial capitalism existed by 1900, most of Caversham's handicraft trades remained unaffected. A local market existed for most things produced under handicraft conditions and it is even possible that a barter economy survived to some extent, especially in times of economic downturn. The small scale of handicraft enterprises, the high degree of self-employment and the fact that much handicraft production was done at home made Caversham a pre-industrial society with residual pre-capitalist values. The character of this sector, and its vigorous survival, provide the focus for this chapter.

#### I

Of the 1,316 men listed in the 1902 electoral rolls, 403 were skilled (30.9 per cent) and 208 were self-employed or employed no more than two or three others (15.8 per cent). In 1922, when there were 509 skilled workers (28.1 per cent), 241 (12.4 per cent) were self-employed or small employers (the word master covers both categories and was widely used). In 1902

some 21.8 per cent of skilled men worked in trades employing less than four other men with the same skill, not usually in the same shop, and 6.4 per cent were the only journeymen practitioners of their craft. In 1922 the proportion of men in such trades had fallen to just under 18 per cent although the actual number had increased from 82 to 107 men. Among masters the pattern was more marked. In 1914, for instance, thirty-five (9.3 per cent) were the only men in business in a trade and in all but seven trades there were less than four in business.

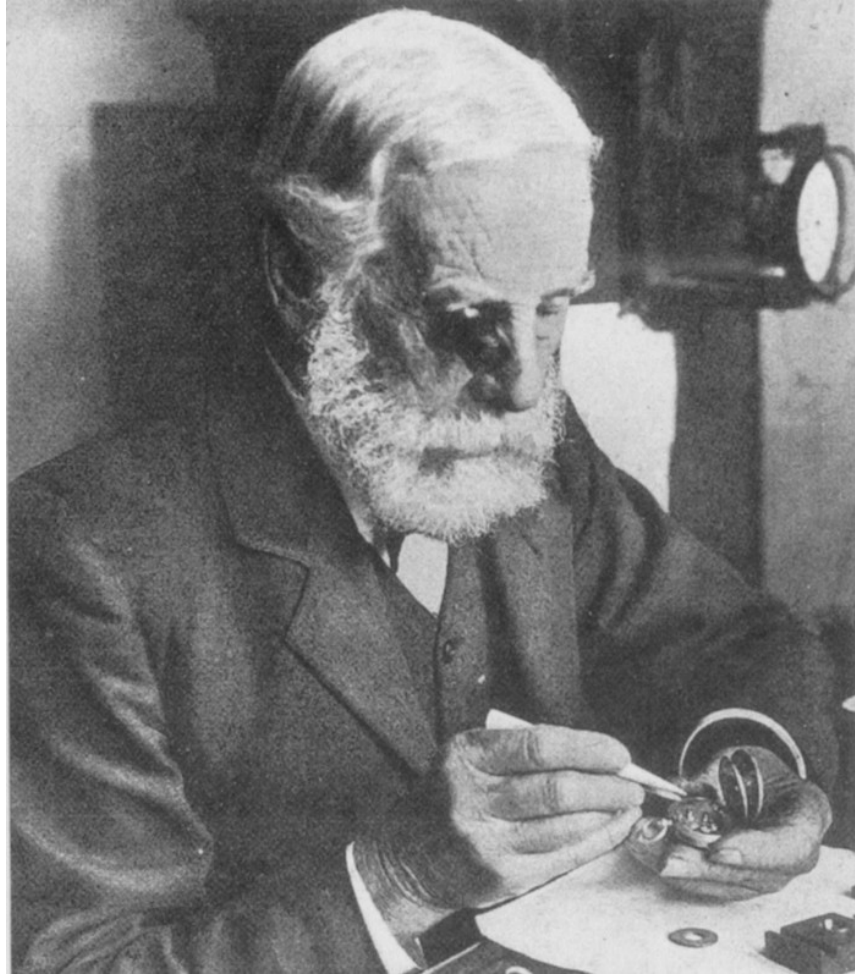
Entrance to a skilled trade, as it has been defined here, could only be achieved by serving an apprenticeship, which provided a definition no less than it gave these men a precise sense of their occupation. As a result, cricket coaches and jockeys have not been included as skilled workers.<sup>2</sup> The idea of what constituted a craft or a trade had become quite stable by the late nineteenth century, and Caversham provided a refuge from many of the changes which disrupted those meanings in Europe and North America. The skilled worked either in handicraft workshops, where the division of labour had not changed for some generations, or in factories. In the new factories of the industrial revolution, such as woollen mills and clothing factories, the machine structured the division of labour. Not all factories were like this, as we shall see.<sup>3</sup> As a rule, in the handicraft sector, unlike the factory sector, journeymen often became self-employed. The most successful became small employers. These were the masters. Journeymen and masters in the manufacturing trades were often described as artisans, although by the 1920s they usually called themselves tradesmen.



*Tinsmiths worked with lighter metal, usually less than one-eighth of an inch thick (boilermakers worked thicker metal). Most tinsmiths in Caversham worked at Farra Brothers, just north of the Oval, but almost all engineering factories employed some, and a few small workshops hired specialist tinsmiths. Most plumbers also needed either to be tinsmiths or to hire them. Auckland Public Library Photograph Collection.*



*The locksmiths could work alone without assistance from labourer or apprentice. As with other crafts, industrial production and cheaper freight meant that repair work became more important than manufacture, but the community's need for locksmiths did not disappear. Auckland Public Library Photograph Collection.*



*The watchmaker became more of a watch and clock repairer in areas such as Caversham, although apprentices still learnt the craft from scratch. Watchmakers usually had a knack for intricate machines and their window displays were often striking. The work did not involve dirtiness and in many respects they came to be seen as 'white collar'; nor did they need help from apprentices or labourers. Auckland Public Library Photograph Collection.*



*In 1905 most people bought colonial-made saddlery and harnesses, although Brace, Windle, Blythe and Co., a branch of an English firm, were the major importers. The small Caversham workshops did not have an elaborate division of labour. The owner bought the leather from Michaelis, Hallenstein and Farquhar's warehouse in Dowling Street and usually employed a collar-maker, a saddle and harness hand, a stitcher (who could make sails and heavy sack bales if necessary), an apprentice and a labourer. Auckland Public Library Photograph Collection.*

The easiest way to convey the character of the handicraft sector is to list some of the occupations: sail-maker, candle-maker, cooper, japanner, lapidary and taxidermist, cannister-maker, furrier, cap-maker, dobbin-

maker, french-polisher, baker, miller, brewer, confectioner, watch-maker, tinsmith, glazier, maltster, wood-turner, saddler, shipwright, scale-maker, engraver and cutler. At least one master practised in each trade and a lad was serving an apprenticeship (Table 3.1 provides a summary).<sup>4</sup> In most of the handicraft trades engaged in manufacturing only one or two men were in business, but in the retail trades there were often two or three in business in each of the main shopping areas. Apart from these, as the catalogue for the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition of 1889–90 shows, ‘Artisans at Work’ proliferated. Some worked in ‘Home Industries’, including C. Frye from Caversham, who had made an ‘Apparatus for automatically lighting and extinguishing gas lamps’. We would now describe many of these activities as hobbies although they were often work related, but the absence of a distinction between craft and hobby reminds us of the intimate link between work and interest, invention and production, home and work. Besides, exhibiting allowed these artisans to test whether a market existed.<sup>5</sup>

Many skilled men worked in factories, but the rise of the factory did not immediately destroy the older handicraft industry. In bootmaking and clothing sizeable bespoke sectors survived and continued to survive until the 1940s (‘bespoke’ meaning ‘made to the customer’s specifications’).<sup>6</sup> Within larger factories in both industries journeymen also remained numerous, even as the machinists began to appear in the street directories. In 1914, for instance, there were twenty-five journeymen bootmakers, two journeymen boot-finishers and a clicker, although boot manufacturing provided one of the most dramatic examples of an industry transformed by mechanisation.<sup>7</sup> There were also journeymen tailors, a solitary tailor’s cutter, milliners, dressmakers, pressers, shirt-makers, shirt-dressers and a sock-finisher. Women dominated some of these trades, and a few of those employed in the clothing industry may have travelled each day into the city to work in one of the large clothing factories. The majority worked in small workshops. Their need to compete with factory production made subcontracting, sweating and long hours endemic until the Arbitration Court issued its first award for shop tailoresses. Yet in the bespoke sector, unlike the factories, young men and women learned all the skills relevant to their trade rather than the operation of only one machine. It is not clear what happened to apprenticeship in ununionised trades but it may have been

quite informal.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 3.1  
**Caversham's Masters and Journeymen, 1902–22**

	1902		1911		1922	
	Masters	Journeymen	Masters	Journeymen	Masters	Journeymen
baker	10	11	9	15	9	11
blacksmith	6	22	2	21	6	20
bootmaker	9	33	10	35	14	21
brickmaker	6	4	-	6	-	3
builder	2	71	14	74	8	82
butcher	9	9	12	10	5	17
coach-builder	5	2	3	1	1	2
cabinet-maker	1	5	2	3	3	8
coppersmith	1	1	1	1	1	2
jeweller	1	4	2	3	2	3
maltster	2	2	2	2	-	2
painter	2	15	11	25	10	26
plumber	-	15	9	8	7	4
printer	8	14	5	9	4	6
saddler	5	4	2	7	1	4
sail-maker	2	1	-	1	-	1
stonemason	1	3	1	5	-	1
tailor*	3	11	5	10	7	10
tinsmith	5	5	3	3	2	7
wheelwright	1	-	1	2	1	1
whipthong-maker	-	-	1	-	-	-

\* Excluding tailors' cutters.

In the bespoke sector of the bootmaking industry, however, repair work had replaced manufacturing by 1900 and repair shops still relied on hand work. Many old bootmakers (or cobblers) found a means of escaping the consequences of mechanisation or compensating themselves for short time in the factories. George Murray, who had arrived in the colony as a six-week-old baby, did his apprenticeship in bootmaking and later set up on his own account near Forbury Corner. Robert Murray, one of George's sons, remembered the old workshop that his father bought from two old journeymen. 'You didn't stand up at a bench, it was all done on the knee ... and one of them always had his bottle alongside him.' (Alcohol had been integral to the production process in many male handicrafts but disappeared

from most by the 1890s.) When George Murray took over the workshop he worked very long hours, most nights and weekends. Robert learnt the trade from his father and the occasional journeyman. After a few years in a white-collar job, Robert returned in 1917 to take over the workshop. The work was still being done 'on the knee'. 'Later on I got a finishing shaft with ... an edge cutter ... which saved a terrible lot of time. Later on I bought other ... machines ....' When he was secretary to the Boot Repairers' Association 'we had 100 names on the book ... including jokers who did the work at home in the washhouse ...'. Bootmaking was atypical in many respects, for while mechanisation transformed manufacturing, it scarcely affected repair work and most bootmakers continued to make boots not only for themselves but for clients (George Murray would send his son with harder jobs, such as stitching soles, to the factory of his good friend and fellow Baptist, Bob McKinlay).<sup>9</sup>



*George Murray, the Baptist bootmaker, stands outside his shop on David Street with W. B. Taverner, c. 1905. In his window Murray had a large clockwork model from Germany of a boot maker giving his apprentice a hurry-up. He would wind it each afternoon, just before school ended, and children flocked to watch. If he forgot they would come and remind him. Photo courtesy Robert Murray, copied by Reg Graham.*



*When George Murray bought the shop work was still done 'on the knee' rather than at a bench, as is shown here. The introduction of new machines—power-driven stitchers, and new-fangled finishers, trimmers and riveters—simplified some tasks (and increased the dust in the workshop). Skill remained essential in running all these machines, adapting them to new needs and, above all, choosing and preparing the leather. Auckland Public Library Photograph Collection.*

In most handicraft trades the prospect of becoming a master—which meant self-employment—remained good. Because *Stone's Directory* for

*Otago and Southland* provides an alphabetical listing of heads of household on a yearly basis it allows people's occupational and geographic shifts to be reconstructed. The electoral rolls do not allow this although they provide a more complete coverage of the adult population in election years. In order to reconstruct the occupational and geographic mobility of Caversham's skilled workers a list has been generated of all of them present in the 1902 electoral rolls but gone by 1911. The same has been done for the years 1911 and 1922. *Stone's Directory* has been used to locate what happened to those who left. When somebody could not be found there, Henry Wise's *New Zealand Post Office Directory* was checked.

Of the 403 skilled journeymen listed in the electoral rolls as living in Caversham in 1902, 222 had gone from the 1911 electoral roll. By 1911 some 150 (37.2 per cent) of the skilled still lived in Caversham and 29 (7.2 per cent) had died. Of these men, over 81 per cent were still in the same occupation and 14 (9.3 per cent) had become masters. Unfortunately, 105 of the 222 who had disappeared could not be located either in *Stone's Directory* or Wise's but it is possible to provide a collective portrait of the ninety-two skilled workers who had moved. Of those sixty-nine who moved elsewhere in Dunedin, four became masters in their trade while six became self-employed in unrelated trades (such as two farmers, a newsagent and a commercial traveller). Besides this success rate of 14.5 per cent, four others became foremen, three fitters became engineers and one man entered a white-collar occupation. Within this group, two masters also became journeymen. Other changes occurred. James Roy, a labourer in 1902, listed himself as an engine-driver in 1911, while Herbert Hofland changed from compositor to tailor's cutter. The great majority changed addresses but not jobs (of all the traceable movers who stayed in Dunedin, five of them shifted to St Kilda, twenty-two to South Dunedin, and another twenty-two moved off The Flat but remained in the city). Nine moved elsewhere in Otago and fourteen moved still further afield. Of the ten men who left Dunedin and changed their jobs, two became farmers, three became masters, two were promoted and transferred within the railway workshops, a fitter became a chief engineer for a private firm and three gave up skilled jobs to become labourers in the North Island. Ten of those who disappeared from the 1911 electoral roll had reappeared in Caversham by 1912 and six more returned but settled in Dunedin. Five of these sixteen men became

masters and one was promoted. Eleven of the twenty-three long-distance movers were upwardly mobile.

The picture did not change much in the next decade. Of the 501 skilled workers living in Caversham in 1911, 158 (27.5 per cent) were still there and in the same jobs in 1922. In this period 330 had left, disappeared or died. Many of the movers stayed in the Dunedin area: twenty-eight had moved elsewhere on The Flat, twenty-seven had moved elsewhere in Dunedin, and forty-two had moved further afield. Of the traceable movers in Dunedin, ten became self-employed (for instance a slaughterman became a milkman), eight became masters in their trades, one became a foreman and three entered white-collar jobs. Those who moved farthest, once again, did best. Some were making progress towards becoming masters. Edward Bezett, for instance, ceased to be a journeyman and became a butcher's manager in Balclutha. These snapshots of twenty-year periods would need to be adjusted for age to be fully satisfactory. The ratios remind us of the opportunity structure. In 1902 there were forty-five trades with four or less journeymen to a master in Caversham, and the number grew to fifty-three in 1914 and fifty-eight in 1922. Prospects for self-employment probably seemed reasonable. Table 3.1 confirms the point.

By following 171 men in the 1902 electoral roll who left Caversham and searching for them in *Stone's Directory* for 1914 we can further underline two points: the importance of the handicraft trades among the skilled generally, and the ease with which journeymen could become masters. Seventy-seven of the departers proved to be untraceable either in *Stone's Directory* or in Henry Wise's *Post Office Directory*. Possibly as many as forty had died. Of those ninety-four men who could be traced, fifty-six had moved only within Dunedin (usually to an adjacent suburb). If we delete from the group two men who retired and two where we cannot be sure that we have the same person, we find that forty-two men (66 per cent) were in exactly the same occupation. Three men declined within the same broad job description (e.g. a boiler-maker became a machinist), a wood-turner became an iron-turner, and nineteen (30 per cent) became self-employed or small employers. Ten of these became masters in their trade. The twenty-six who left Dunedin confirm the pattern. Fourteen still had the same job, four had become masters, four became agents and four became self-employed in unrelated trades (three became farmers and one a publican). There does

appear to be a strong relationship between geographic mobility and success.<sup>10</sup> This may reflect the fact that Caversham had ceased to grow as rapidly as suburbs such as St Kilda, or the social complexities that accompanied upwards mobility in an egalitarian community.

Opportunities had shrunk over the previous twenty years. John Angus noted the fact that almost half of the workforce in some sectors were self-employed or employers in the 1880s, suggesting that ‘many ... operated in a pre-industrial environment’.<sup>11</sup> The Caversham data suggest a decline in the opportunity to become self-employed. From a random sample of fifty skilled workers who lived in Caversham in 1890, thirty-six had disappeared from *Stone’s Directory* by 1902. Thirteen (36 per cent) of these thirty-six skilled workers had become self-employed, however, mostly without leaving Caversham. By contrast, in the period 1902–14 only forty (just under 23 per cent) of the 167 men who could be traced had become self-employed by 1914, and thirty-one of these had left Caversham to do so. The situation deteriorated again in the 1911–22 period, when only 6 per cent became masters and 2.3 per cent became self-employed in unrelated work. The sample followed through the 1890s is small but it does suggest that opportunities shrank within Caversham once demographic and industrial stability had been achieved.

The main capital cost of becoming self-employed was a building and some land, for most artisans acquired the tools of their craft while they were apprentices and journeymen. In New Zealand, unlike Britain, men found it relatively easy to obtain both.<sup>12</sup> Besides which, a building could (and often did) serve a variety of functions. Home, shop and workshop might well be under one roof. In several Caversham households the occupants all listed the same occupation, such as french-polisher, confectioner or saddler. These were presumably family businesses. Often the business address was the household address. We know little about the survival (or re-establishment) of a domestic economy within the handicraft trades, although apprentices usually lived with their own parents, relatives, or in a boarding house. Children could do many jobs, however, and truancy was common among the families of master tradesmen. Wives also had clear roles. The evidence suggests that a household economy continued to survive in the handicraft sector, characterised by domestic production, although it became less

common. Even when masters and their families separated home and work, in most cases they continued to live close to where they worked.<sup>13</sup>

Within the handicraft sector, class position—whether according to Marx or Weber—tended to reflect age. It is not clear how a lad was recruited, but at about the age of fourteen or fifteen he decided to forgo the higher short-term rewards available to the unskilled and serve an apprenticeship. In many cases parents had to subsidise their sons by giving cheap rent or financial support. Paternal advice, and paternal occupation, probably figured as an important positive or negative reference. Whatever the young man's reasons for choosing to enter a specific trade, the apprenticeship involved his parents in a legally binding contract with an employer under either the jurisdiction of the recently established Arbitration Court, or the courts (few employers used the courts to enforce indentures by the 1890s, but they still preferred apprentices to have finished their training before their twenty-first birthday). After serving his time, which varied between four and seven years (depending on the craft), the young man became a journeyman.<sup>14</sup> At this point he was qualified to practise his trade, but still had much to learn. Many so-called unskilled workers became highly skilled, but could only serve an apprenticeship by taking a big cut in wages. Nobody ever did this. Few handicraft trades were entirely static. The presence of apprentices and unskilled helpers served as a reminder that in periods of economic 'slack' employers could lay off journeymen and hire less skilled (and cheaper) workers. New machines might also create that possibility. Market position, as Weber might have said, provided a source of unity within each craft, but only a potential one, because journeymen and apprentices had different interests and could be in competition for work.



*The staff at Horden and White's Carriage Factory, c. 1890. Carriage-making required a great variety of skills, most of them made redundant by the motor car. Horden and White's employed bodymakers, wheelwrights, coachsmiths, coach painters, coachtrimmers, tinsmiths and blacksmiths. Hocken Library.*

Initiation into the trade coincided with initiation into manhood and masculinity. Because they earned little during their apprenticeships, most skilled men believed that they had a property right in their skill, an idea which seems to pre-date David Ricardo's proof that all workers had a property right in their labour. They often described both labour and skill as their capital, and this gave them a property right not only in their job but in the trade itself. In expansive moods journeymen often claimed to be the natural guardians of their trade and its legitimate interests, just as in most trades they boasted of their importance to 'civilisation'. Could civilisation exist without literacy and printing? the compositors asked. Or bread? the bakers chimed. Each trade had its own claim. In many trades the journeymen also saw themselves as the inventors.<sup>15</sup> Many worked at their trade in their spare time, making model ships or engines, extending their skills. Methven, the fitter, made one of the first motor cars in New Zealand in his spare time. It is hard now to recapture the sense of exuberant pride in

skill, although Exhibition catalogues provide eloquent (if sparse) reminders. Each trade also had an ancient history and a strong sense of its own customs, collective experience and traditions, a unified moral perspective, in short. For most skilled workers their trade, learnt during their teenage years, constituted part of their adult identity as men. Unemployment, then, posed complex problems.

After some years gaining more experience, a process that still often involved extensive travel, the journeyman might marry, settle down and work on his own account or hire an apprentice or even a journeyman.<sup>16</sup> At this point the journeyman left the working class as it is usually defined. Instead of selling his labour on the market he now hired labour or worked on his own account. Unfortunately there is no way that one can infer from the available evidence what made the jump desirable. Undoubtedly not all journeymen wanted (or had the confidence) to be self-employed. Those who did no doubt wanted independence, both financial and in their daily work. Few seem to have wanted great wealth. There is also evidence to suggest that some set up on their own account only to achieve a specific financial goal and then gratefully returned to wage labour. There were fewer risks and headaches with wage labour, and nor did one strain the complex web of friendship and kinship. If it is unclear why men did or did not want to be masters, nor is it clear what made the jump possible. Apart from ambition, an expanding economy, good luck, good health, a willingness to move and a capable and thrifty wife were in most cases the necessary preconditions for achieving success; the lack of any one might defeat the attempt to obtain independence. A downturn in the business cycle also knocked men back. If the journeyman made a success of self-employment, like H. E. Shacklock the iron-founder or George Methven the fitter, he left the working class but not his trade.<sup>17</sup> This may explain the fact that masters and men in the larger establishments often belonged to the same churches, and that the skilled, whether in business on their own account or selling their labour, dominated the Protestant churches.<sup>18</sup>

## II

The skilled men of the handicraft trades did not resent the success of their

masters, unless they became selfish or autocratic. And the masters, of course, had been socialised into the norms and values of the craft. In all known cases the masters continued to practise their craft alongside their journeymen and apprentices. This was true not only in the handicraft trades but in most of the retail sector (both of Caversham's largest grocers, for instance, continued to work in their shops despite considerable success, and their sons also worked their way up in the grocery trade). But even the most successful masters, like Shacklock and Methven, enjoyed authority by virtue of their craft skill and continued to instruct and supervise their artisans, most of whom they had trained. Shacklock sent two of his three sons to the School of Design, but two of them also served apprenticeships, one as an iron-moulder and the other as a pattern-maker.<sup>19</sup> The skilled had a deep-rooted belief that only those skilled in the craft should exercise managerial or supervisory functions. Most masters continued to hold that view. Shacklock and Methven were not typical, of course, because they became industrialists and factory production replaced handicraft methods. They began as handicraft manufacturers, working from home, but their success made them historically visible. Their behaviour illuminates the values and beliefs of the hundreds who began and ended in the handicraft sector.

In the handicraft trades masters and men were less likely to quarrel with each other than they were to unite in denouncing the growth of factory production and monopoly. Employers were not identified as a class but individually, depending on their actual behaviour. Honest, reliable and industrious employers played a useful if not vital role in production and working men often respected and praised them. Unfair practices would be condemned by all fair-minded employers and not just journeymen. Conflicts of interest did emerge, however. Whereas those working on their own account rarely had to provide the materials, the master who employed others usually did. Unless very well established, he had to buy these on credit from the supplier. If business became slack troubles could begin. Credit would be harder to obtain and customers might delay paying bills. Faced with a liquidity crisis the master or employer might then come to some arrangement with his men to pay them less or to postpone paying them until business improved. Because they thought of the job itself as a

form of property they often accepted (in a high proportion of trades, of course, they had no choice unless they shifted). If this situation lasted for long, however, the master became bankrupt or simply closed shop. Even in good years an easy-going master could get into the same predicament. Whatever the circumstances, the unpaid workers had problems. In bankruptcy proceedings unpaid workers did not enjoy the status of secured creditors. In the late 1880s in the building trades—where journeymen could easily set up on their own account—men began to demand a Workmen's Lien Act which would make unpaid workers secured creditors in bankruptcy proceedings. The Legislative Council threw out the first Workmen's Lien bill, in which the Liberal-Labour government attempted to remedy this situation, but it passed in 1892.<sup>20</sup>

Most men in the handicraft sector regarded debt with horror and the Protestant churches reinforced the idea. The ideology of self-reliance, thrift and paying one's way had deep roots in the handicraft sector. Debt raised the spectre of bankruptcy, and bankruptcy meant not just disgrace but disaster. The man's assets would be auctioned off and his family rendered destitute, even dependent on charity for basic necessities. When faced with such a disaster some killed themselves. Although an extreme step, suicide was common enough. Mary Lee, when she moved from Caversham to Hanover Street, recorded that she got the house for a cheap rent because the previous owner

had had a good Tailoring Business, and then the people were behind in paying ... and when he died he left rather a mess for his son to clean up. It worried the man. In fact he got ill over it ... and one day when he was extra bothered, he run into the Lavatory....<sup>21</sup>

Bankruptcy was an extreme form of losing control. A few, like H. E. Shacklock, committed suicide when the firm passed to the children. That too was rare. Being a master, however, was not all beer and skittles.

Mechanisation also created conflicts, especially when it created a division of labour which allowed employers to substitute unskilled for skilled workers. The handicraft trades, by definition, did not have a complex division of labour. Watch-makers, taxidermists, sail-makers and lapidaries trained their apprentices in all the tasks and skills relevant to their work (as happened in bespoke trades). Although a division of labour often existed in handicraft trades, the idea of the craftsman who oversaw or

undertook the manufacture of a finished product was the essence of the handicraft mode of production. Mechanisation of parts of the productive process threatened the craftsman's monopoly, a monopoly that rested on skill. In 1889–90 and from 1896 onwards some groups of craftsmen, such as compositors and bootmakers, formed unions in an effort to monopolise control of new technology and thus protect their position. Union solidarity was the key to their success, but it had to be achieved. Neither a common relationship to the means of production, a shared market position, nor a craft-based moral perspective made success inevitable.<sup>22</sup> In most handicraft trades, producing for a local market, men had no reason to form unions, and the trade's custom gave them control of the labour process. Given the size of the local market, nor did most masters have much reason to invest in new technologies, even when available.

Control of the workplace made unions unnecessary. By and large, unionism among the skilled was confined to those trades where mechanisation threatened to disrupt the handicraft mode of production and dilute the necessary skill, thus allowing an employer to put a less skilled (and cheaper) person on to the work. In the clothing and bootmaking industries, where a bespoke sector coexisted with an expanding factory system, unions such as the Bootmakers and Tailoresses had very few members outside the factories. Indeed Jane Runciman, the secretary of the Dunedin Tailoresses from 1896 until 1920, made no effort at all to organise women in the bespoke sector.<sup>23</sup> It was the same in the printing trade.<sup>24</sup> Historians have largely concentrated on the impact of mechanisation on skilled work, but it needs to be borne in mind that technological change could turn masters as well as journeymen into anachronisms. New sources of energy, for instance, reduced the need for boiler-makers; blacksmiths faced declining opportunities as the internal combustion engine replaced the horse; and stonemasons, numerous and proud in 1890, had almost disappeared by 1920.<sup>25</sup>



*The blacksmith represented the oldest of the metal workers. By the mid nineteenth century specialised smiths proliferated: farriers, wheelwrights, frame-smiths, blacksmiths, file-smiths, spring-makers and edgetool-makers. Each industry, including railway engineering, had its own specialisations, In the colony versatility counted for more than specialisation. Despite the growth in industrial production, opportunities for self-employment remained good. The antiquity of the craft gave each blacksmith a strong sense of craft custom.*  
Auckland Public Library Photograph Collection.

### III

Except in rare cases, of course, it is hard to find out much about journeymen or even master craftsmen. At most we can establish a few biographical details and try to glean from them something of their world. Caversham included two areas where masters concentrated, for except in the building industry they became retailers as well as craftsmen when they set up on their own account as masters. Many lived and traded in

Caversham township on the Main South Road, between the Police Station and Morrison Street. The larger businesses were owned by journeymen made good, men who still worked at their trade, like Sam McCracken and Peter Rutherford, grocers and merchants (Rutherfords also had a boot shop on the same block by 1913); or Alex Cowie of Cowie & Co., brewer, and J. R. Briggs of the Standard Brewery; or Robert Todd of Todd & Brown, tailors; or George Methven, 'mechanical engineer' of Goodall Street. These men were the elite of Caversham. Others appear to have worked from home, like Alfred Morris the dubbin maker (although during the war he prospered sufficiently to open a factory and store on the Main South Road). There were others scattered around, with small concentrations of retailers at Forbury Corner, Kensington and St Clair, and there were larger and (sometimes) wealthier men, such as W. S. Bedford, the 'Ladies' Tailor', William Dawson, the brewer, Andrew Loasby of the Wahoo patent-medicine factory, and Henry Shacklock, who lived in the area but had their businesses elsewhere; to some extent they lived in but were not of Caversham. Most of these men were still alive and prosperous at the end of our period in 1922.



*Brown's Bakery, Marion (later Thorn) Street, c. 1920. The principal baker supervised the dough-making and mixing, and was usually known as the dough-maker. In small bakeries he also made the yeast and supervised the fermentation process. He would often employ men for less-skilled tasks—a cutter, a moulder, a drawer, and a bakehouse labourer—and also someone to do deliveries. Hocken Library.*

Many other tradesmen worked on their own account and traded from buildings along the Main South Road. On the right-hand side as one travelled south-west, dotted among the houses and factories, were several shops. Frank Wilkinson, the chemist, practised his trade. Charles Clark, a newsagent and a lithographer by trade, also had a shop and lived upstairs. Next door lived Mrs J. Boyd, draper. As one climbed the hill one passed a baker-confectioner, Todd Brothers storekeepers, a fruiterer, a hairdresser, a boarding house, a blacksmith's smithy, Caversham Public Hall, a hotel, a butcher, an express proprietor, another butcher, a storekeeper and Briggs's brewery at the corner of Sydney Street. Above that point, which became the tram terminus in 1905, lay the Rockyside Brickworks and open country, dotted with occasional cottages and villas, and the gardens and buildings of the Industrial School. If one walked down the other side of the valley, travelling east, one passed a bootmaker's shop, Cowie's brewery, a plumber, baker, bootmaker, Todd & Brown tailors (who later moved to larger premises down the hill on the corner of Rutherford Street), a hairdresser, Yee Wah's store and Christen Christensen's confectionery factory. Towards

the bottom of the hill was Peter Rutherford's shop (bought from John Anderson when he subdivided his nursery), Griffiths Brothers the butchers, a watch-maker, a cabinet-maker, Miss Channon's drapery and another store. Little had changed by 1922, although more journeymen and clerks now lived among the little shops and household factories and more of the owners lived elsewhere. Small-scale commodity production, service and retailing businesses still dominated the area and gave local society much of its character.

The other shopping-manufacturing centres in the borough were much the same, although only Hillside Road in Kensington (now King Edward Road) rivalled Caversham township in size. In 1902, walking down the right-hand side, away from the Town Belt and towards St Kilda beach, one passed Sam Lister's printery and the office of the *Otago Liberal*, a few cottages, then K. Fraser and Son fruiterers, two more modest houses (one occupied by K. Fraser's proud mother), a boarding house, a watch-maker, a storekeeper, J. B. Taverner and Sons the tobacconists (on their way to becoming prosperous commission agents), a baker, another watch-maker, another fruiterer and a wood and coal merchant. Then came Ogg's Corner, the common name given to what was officially named Cargill's Corner. If one crossed the unmetalled road and walked back towards the Town Belt, one passed Bottings the butchers, a picture-framer's shop, a newsagent, a bootmaker, a branch of Draper's Supply, a chemist, a photographer, a plumber, yet another fruiterer, J. H. Hancock and Company's store (which later moved to the other side of Cargill's corner), a few houses and then Alfred Cox's Kensington Hotel. Just off Hillside Road, in Wain Street, stood Hancock's 'Blue Bell' Oatmeal Mill (which had changed hands twice by 1922, and began milling flour as well) and Lambert's pipe-making factory. Hancock, one of the most successful, began as a wood and coal merchant in the 1880s, acquired other businesses, but later concentrated on being a seed-merchant and nurseryman. He also played a vigorous part in community activities, being a key figure in the IOOF's Unity Lodge, the bowling club (he represented New Zealand against Australia in 1906) and local body affairs. Little had changed by 1922, although some shops were demolished in 1911–12 to make way for The Flat's first motion-picture theatre, the Glasgow, later named the King Edward, and in 1911 Fletcher and Morris opened a modern office and joinery factory on the corner of

Cameron Street.



*J. H. Hancock as  
seen by the  
Sketcher, no, 2,  
Aug. 1913.*

Twelve of these men who lived and worked in Caversham—whose wives were usually their partners—died and left wills which provide some further information. Some of them, such as Andrew Devlin the lapidary and William Smyth the taxidermist, were the last to practise their trades. When Devlin died in 1951, aged eighty-one, the *Otago Daily Times* described him as the ‘Last Lapidary Craftsman’. He made the greenstone casket given to the Duke of York in 1901. For fifty years he and his brother had run the only lapidary business in the country. Their father had been a brassmoulder and Methodist in Edinburgh before migrating to Dunedin when Andrew was a child aged five.<sup>26</sup> William Smyth, the taxidermist, whose workshop was hidden from passersby, had migrated from Ireland at the age of thirty-four. He too was a Methodist. In his will he allowed his executors to rent his house to one son for ‘eight shillings per week subject to his taking proper

care of my collection of stuffed birds...'. The other son, having 'failed to succeed' despite being given a laundry business, received nothing. His wife had left him in 1889 for the last but not the first time.<sup>27</sup> With the exception of Robert Rutherford, the ex-photographer, and Wilkinson, the chemist, none of these men left estates valued at more than £10,000. Alex Cowie, the Scots-Anglican brewer whose brew was locally popular, died in 1928 after seventy years here and his estate was sworn at £382. Henry Todd the tailor (and partner in Todd & Brown), a prominent Caversham Baptist, left an estate sworn at just over £815 when he died in 1949. Joe Bartlett, a Presbyterian from London, who had lived here seventy-two years when he died in 1948, had risen from clicker to bootmaker. His estate was valued at about £473. These, as far as we can tell, were the successful ones. By comparison, John Sidey left £130,000 when he died in 1915 and William Dawson, who died in 1923 (after the younger Speight had transformed the firm into a national giant), left £250,000.<sup>28</sup>

The handicraft trades provided a model for many occupations where nobody served an apprenticeship. Most self-employed fell into this category, for experience and age brought increased skill. For instance, C. N. Baeyertz, who owned, managed and edited the *Triad*, ran his own business. Real-estate and other agents, the father and son with the agency for South British Insurance, and the cricket coach all entered business on their own account. In some other occupations, such as teaching and law, lads trained on the job in much the same way as apprentices (although progress had begun to demand more formal training). The experience of these men was not dissimilar to that of the master tradesmen. The relative importance of physical work, dexterity and knowledge changed in many occupations during this period. Complex cross-tensions could exist between the criteria. J. F. Neil, the famous herbalist who had his shop in George Street and his nursery in Caversham, is a good example of someone in a trade where knowledge was more important than physical effort (although other forms of knowledge called his skill and his qualifications into question).<sup>29</sup> In other cases, such as dentistry, formal knowledge became more important, especially after Sidey pushed through a new system of registration and obtained a Dental School for Otago University. In this period the 'dirtiness' of the job became increasingly important, especially among the young, for

‘dirt’ became one of the great obsessions of the age.<sup>30</sup>

The secret rites of all the friendly societies, modelled on those of the freemasons, centred on the concept of craft and the movement through life from apprenticeship to ever higher levels of craft skill and mastery. Various grades of master ran all the friendly societies and the masons. The tools and practices of carpenters and jewellers, the very argot of those crafts, also played an important part in masonic rites. The *New Zealand Masonic Journal* (later entitled *The NZ Craftsman*), the monthly journal of the craft, enjoyed considerable influence. The public prominence of many masons—governors general, leading Liberals, wealthy merchants—also gave the organisation and its ideology an influence out of all proportion to that which the 120 local members might have enjoyed. Few of Caversham’s leading men belonged, other than the politicians (who tended to join most societies), yet from 1880 onwards most public buildings and churches were opened in masonic ceremonies. Local masons could belong to Hiram Lodge, which met in its own hall on Hillside Road or, after 1912, Lodge Morning Star, which met up the hill in Mornington. In 1922 Lodge St Clair opened in South Dunedin. The idea of craft thus permeated much of Caversham society and embodied the experience of many besides the artisans.

The idea of craft also attained ideological significance in the last half of the nineteenth century. ‘John Ruskin’s fervent idealization of craft handwork, in his books *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*, gave the idea of craft an impetus which it was never afterwards to lose.’ Although Ruskin’s denunciation of the machine and its debased products helped to sever the meaning of craft from that of trade, his rules for craft helped to foster the pride of skilled men in their skill. ‘Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions’, he wrote. ‘If you would have that precision out of them ... you must unhumanise them.’ It is unlikely that Caversham’s skilled men and women subscribed to his idealisation of medieval guilds, but his works proved enormously popular. His insistence that an exact finish should never be demanded for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end, may well have shaped the widespread colonial notion that ‘she’ll be right’. Be that as it may, Ruskin and his most influential disciple, William Morris,

helped to give the concept of craft an almost religious significance. They also laid an important foundation for the growth of socialism by insisting that the machine existed for man, not man for the machine. This ethical insight required that technological progress pay a dividend in human welfare.<sup>[31](#)</sup>

## IV

For many of the more successful masters—and for many of the skilled journeymen who lived among them—this small geographic community contained their entire world. A surprising proportion of the immigrants had kin near at hand, as did the growing proportion of New Zealand born. Their friends were likely to live in the neighbourhood. They met and mixed regularly at church and in their lodges. The network of voluntary organisations also provided numerous meeting places. Those with children at school also had a further focus to their social lives. Their sense of who they were, even their self-respect, was rooted in the community. They saw themselves as decent and hardworking, without airs or pretensions, as good as any and better than most. Those who left wills almost invariably chose neighbours and fellow masters as their executors and divided their property equally among their children.



*Sam Lister and his wife with (probably) one of their eldest children. His workshop remained until the late 1970s and the hot-lead moveable-type printing press was still there (although the printer was unsure of its age). Photo Reg Graham, courtesy Jean Williams.*

Four brief biographical sketches further amplify our understanding. Samuel Lister illustrates the expectations and radicalism of skilled men in handicraft trades. Lister was probably born somewhere between 1832 and 1834 in Edinburgh, a major centre of handicraft trades even after they had been destroyed elsewhere in much of Britain, and served his apprenticeship as a lithographic printer. In 1862 he married Jane Miller, a dressmaker, and in 1865 they and their two children sailed for Auckland on the *Resolute*, Lister serving as precentor for the Presbyterians on board. It is not clear when they headed for Dunedin, but by 1868 *Punch* carried some of his

lithographic cartoons and the Listers lived in Roslyn. Before long they shifted to Bathgate Road, just off Cargill Road, in South Dunedin. Over the next twenty years Lister mastered the engraving and printing trades and was involved in three business partnerships, all short lived. He and his wife had eight more children, but the death of his eldest son in 1875—or perhaps the collapse of a partnership—may have turned him to heavy drinking. He had long been a pillar of the Presbyterian church, but he came under attack for his drinking and angrily broke with the church. This break may have moved him towards the secular traditions of radicalism that competed with organised religion for the loyalty of Britain's artisans.<sup>32</sup> Whatever the origins of his radicalism, in 1887 he published the first issue of the weekly paper which made him famous (or infamous), the *Otago Workman*. In 1888 he moved his business premises from Princes Street to Hillside Road, Kensington, just ten minutes' walk from his home.

This weekly paper espoused atheism, anti-clericalism, republicanism and the values of brotherhood and democracy. Brotherhood and democracy, of course, represented the idealised character of the handicraft trades. Lister did not believe that there should be a conflict between capital and labour; harmony was the natural relationship.<sup>33</sup> The *Otago Workman*, which incorporated the *Forbury News*, also carried news and gossip from The Flat, theatre reviews, sporting notes, poetry and short stories. The paper's anonymous correspondent, 'The Chiseler', wrote a satirical column each week and professed himself 'very apt to speak the truth, unpleasing though it be'. 'Chiseler' pulled no punches, delighted in sharp invective and provided a witty commentary on everything from the ancestry of Queen Victoria to his on-going battle with his wife. It is not clear whether Lister wrote this column, but he invariably penned the trenchant editorials in which he denounced 'the selfish greed, and tyranny of unscrupulous capital', and insisted 'upon the toilers getting an honest, fair share of the results of their labour, so that they can live in decent comfort'.

Lister never belonged to a union, but he strongly supported unions. The union represented brotherhood, democracy and, after 1890, the social basis for the politics of socialism (his views will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7). Although Lister continued to publish his weekly paper throughout the 1890s, small job-printing shops such as his were rarely

unionised. Men in large printing establishments joined the Typographical Union, especially when their employers introduced linotype machines. Small workshops such as Lister's had no need for such expensive new technologies. Here a consensus prevailed, even in lean years, and the union remained foreign.<sup>34</sup> Typically, three of Lister's sons served apprenticeships in branches of the printing trade and two ended up as masters. John took over the family firm following his father's death in 1913 and changed his listing in *Stone's Directory* from compositor to printer. The other boys entered skilled trades and two daughters married skilled men, the third and youngest daughter looking after him following his wife's death in 1901. Lister divided his estate equally between all the children. He remained a well-known figure on The Flat until his death, although his atheism and republicanism made him somewhat disreputable to the end. No newspaper provided an obituary.

Shacklock also illustrates the craftsman's life. Where Lister's radicalism made him unusual, however, Shacklock had unusual business success. Henry Ely Shacklock was twenty-three years old when he arrived in Dunedin in 1862. 'His only assets were youth, determination, and skill at his trade of iron moulding.' The son of a poor widow in the Midlands, he had learned to read and write at the parish school and then served his apprenticeship as an iron moulder in the foundries of Nottingham and Derby. Foundries depended upon iron moulders and pattern-makers. The pattern-maker, a highly skilled carpenter or joiner, made the pattern which the moulder placed in the mould, rammed sand around, then removed before the molten metal was poured into the cavity. It is not known why Shacklock became an iron moulder. Nor is it known why he emigrated, although he undoubtedly hoped to better his lot. Before leaving—initially he planned to follow a cousin to Australia but he became impatient with delays—he became engaged to the daughter of a tailor, Elizabeth Bradley. She proved to be the emigrant tradesman's ideal wife, a 'really useful ... partner in trade'.<sup>35</sup>

William Wilson's Otago Foundry had poured the first casting made in Dunedin only two months before Shacklock arrived. Not surprisingly, he could not at first find work in his trade. After a stint as a labourer he and his wife, who joined him in 1863, moved to Oamaru where his sister and her

husband had settled. Several foundries and engineering shops had been established in Oamaru and Shacklock apparently found work in his trade. His mother joined them in 1865 and the next year they bought a section on Park Terrace, overlooking the Oval in Kensington, and returned to Dunedin. Colonial foundries were mainly jobbing shops and he still had trouble finding regular work. This uncertainty may have persuaded him to establish the South End Foundry in late 1871. He now had a good grasp of all branches of the trade and they had accumulated some capital. The timing could not have been better. Julius Vogel led the colony into a period of economic expansion and a good market existed for agricultural implements, mining machinery, boilers, engines and small steam boats.

Like many tradesmen, Shacklock had an intense interest in the scientific principles relevant to his work and a commitment to self-improvement through education. For the first couple of years, however, he operated a jobbing foundry and hired only a few apprentices. 'The yard soon became littered ... with heaps of sand and coal and stacks of pig and scrap iron. The moulding was done with sand from Green Island, later regarded as amongst the best natural moulding sands in the world.' His skill had already become legendary and he began trying to construct a coal range which suited Otago's cheap but smoky lignite coal and wooden houses. British ranges had to be built into the wall by a skilled bricklayer, while the American Leamington, the most popular model, performed poorly on lignite and tended to deposit soot on the floor. By 1873, after considerable experimentation, he had designed a stove which could be used without a chimney (or the need to employ a bricklayer), all the flues being enclosed in the cast-iron casing. The new stove could also perform well on lignite, which needed a fire which drew well, because he designed and made a wide and shallow fire box. 'The firebox was near the range top and the flues about the oven were shaped and constricted to encourage the flames to travel further.'<sup>36</sup>

At first Shacklock manufactured the ranges only as a sideline. When jobbing work was slack they would cast and store the various parts. Only when enough parts had been made would Shacklock call a halt to all other work. The day would be devoted to assembling ranges. Praise poured in. Builders and home owners found them easy to install and they performed

well on lignite. Before patenting his range in 1882 he introduced several modifications designed—probably in consultation with his wife—to appeal to customers. He and a friend, with whom he shared a passion for astronomy, named the new stove ‘Orion’.

Rivals emerged, but none supplanted Shacklock’s ‘Orion’. Despite the ‘Long Depression’ his business flourished and expanded. Where many employers cut wages or substituted boys for tradesmen, Shacklock lowered costs by using machinery where possible and improving the ease of assembly. Usually he designed his own machines. He also erected a new cupola with a steam lift. The new furnace was fired by a Baker blower. ‘Prior to that the blower had been a crude affair worked by a windlass and an old horse so lethargic that a mechanical whip was designed to hasten his steady plod....’<sup>37</sup> Shacklock enjoyed invention, and designed and patented various items. The firm manufactured some of them and a range of specialised stoves such as a baker’s oven, a tailor’s stove and a laundry stove. The ‘Orion’ remained the mainstay of the business.

The ovens are noted for the REGULARITY OF HEAT. The bottoms heat well, pastry can be browned or any liquid substance, such as a pie or rice pudding will boil from the bottom; large sized loaves of bread can also be baked in them.<sup>38</sup>

Although the firm devoted more effort to servicing than to selling, the demand for Shacklock’s ranges kept growing. By 1900 the firm employed some forty workers.

H. E. SHACKLOCK,  
SOUTH END FOUNDRY,  
DUNEDIN.

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MAKER OF THE PATENT PORTABLE  
**“ORION”**  
 COOKING RANGE

Fitted with either High or Low Pressure Boiler, for Burning COAL, LIGNITE, or WOOD. From 8in. to 24in. long.

**H. E. SHACKLOCK.**

THE  
**“SIRUS”**  
 PORTABLE OPEN FIRE  
 Cooking Range.

Specially Designed for Burning Wood. Also works well with Peat, or any of the Various Coals and Lignites found throughout New Zealand.

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TOMB RAILINGS, IRON FRETWORK, AND GENERAL CASTINGS,  
 AT LOWEST RATES.

INSPECTION OF STOCK INVITED.

FULL PARTICULARS POSTED TO ANY ADDRESS, ON APPLICATION TO  
 H. E. SHACKLOCK, SOUTH END FOUNDRY,  
 CRAWFORD ST., DUNEDIN.

*An advertisement for Shacklock's 'Orion' in Stone's Directory, 1889.*

Despite this spectacular success, old Henry remained a skilled tradesman and continued to supervise the crucial operations from the shop floor. He invariably watched the men prepare the moulds, insisting on various precautions to prevent flaws in the casting. He also continued to carefully control the preparation of the moulding sand and decided on the mix of sand and pulverised coal. By careful supervision old Henry not only ensured the quality of his product but trained all his men. Most of them also served apprenticeships under him. The morning post mortems, when the castings were broken out, were famous. He expected his men to learn from

their mistakes. If they did not, he ticked them off. Yet he was fair as well as strict, could laugh at himself and enjoyed authority on the floor because of his great knowledge and skill. He insisted that all his workers belong to the union and required his key hands to attend church. Indeed many of them joined his family at the Moray Place Congregational church each Sunday.<sup>[39](#)</sup>

Shacklock, like many artisans, always took a broad view of political questions although he never became a socialist. As early as 1870 he had been treasurer of the Oamaru Mechanics' Institute and his passion for self-improvement shaped his life. So did his craft pride. Like many skilled men, and especially ironworkers, he had a vision of his new country as a manufacturing nation 'which may eventually occupy a prominent position among the nations of the world'. To this end he became a foundation member of the New Zealand Manufacturers' Association, which had its inaugural meeting in Dunedin in 1884. He also helped to found the School of Art, served on its committee for more than fifteen years and supported technical education. Throughout his life the craftsman's ethic shaped his life, his relations with his workmen and the way he ran his business. Quality always came first for this 'craftsman in cast iron'. He was an ironmaster rather than a businessman. Profits interested him less than challenges to his craft skill. He became depressed after retiring from work and in December 1902 took his own life.<sup>[40](#)</sup>

Old Henry left his firm on a sound footing by registering it as a company in 1900 and making his four sons and himself equal principals. He had also carefully arranged the training of his sons. All had attended school until about thirteen years old, becoming literate and numerate, and all of them had attended David Hutton's art classes to learn technical drawing. All of them also spent some time on the factory floor. The oldest served his apprenticeship in his father's trade of iron moulding; the second son was apprenticed to a pattern-maker at the factory; and the youngest trained as a fitter then acquired his marine engineer's ticket. Only Percival William, a shy and aloof man, did not serve an apprenticeship, but his prowess at mental arithmetic destined him for the office and the position of company secretary.<sup>[41](#)</sup>

Our last two examples—a brick-maker and a pipemaker—were similar to Shacklock in starting off as handicraft manufacturers but becoming so

successful that they owned and managed large factories. Yet both men, like Shacklock, maintained many aspects of handicraft production, especially with regard to the labour process, where a democracy of skilled men combined to manufacture bricks and ceramics under the supervision of the most skilled of all, the master. The line between artisan and factory operative was blurred in Caversham. Individuals could go back and forth across this boundary without being aware of the distinction, let alone the explanatory weight which scholars would later accord it.

Before the Shiel brothers established their dominance in brick-making the Caversham industry was local and small scale. In 1884 *Stone's Directory* listed six brickworks in Caversham, but from 1888 until 1910 only two operated at any one time, the Rockyside Brickworks Co. and Shiel's. In the nineteenth century brick-makers often set up on their own account when they found a good clay deposit, but independence usually lasted no longer than the clay. The bricks were made by hand, but digging and pugging the clay usually forced the brick-maker to hire a labourer. He also needed a horse to provide the power to operate the pug mill. After pugging the clay, the brick-maker cut off the brick clod, placed it in a mould, then stacked the bricks on racks before firing them in a kiln. The clamp kiln, crude but easily made, wasted fuel and produced uneven results. Only established brick-makers could afford anything more expensive than a clamp kiln.

Charles Shiel established his first brickworks on the site of the old Caversham tunnel in 1880. He lived on Caversham Valley Road and his parents lived in a handsome two-storeyed brick villa in Fitzroy Street (the father knew the trade and probably taught two of his sons). The business prospered. In 1890 his younger brother, William, joined him. Another brother, Thomas, who had no interest in bricks, also joined the partnership as secretary. At some point in the early 1890s Charles located another source of excellent clay at Forbury, about half way along Forbury Road and opposite the quarry. By 1910 the factory occupied ten acres. Charles built an enormous two-storeyed brick house nearby. William bought a sheep station and employed a live-in servant.<sup>42</sup>

James Hall Lambert, a pipe-maker, also prospered. A third-generation pipe-maker from Bedfordshire, he crossed to Otago during the goldrushes,

after a few years in Australia. In 1862 he established the Water of Leith Brick, Tile, Drainpipe and Pottery works in North East Valley, using wood-fired kilns. When he exhausted that supply of clay he bought William White's site in Kensington, on land leased from the Caledonian Society on Bridgman Street. It is worth briefly recounting the industrial process involved because it illustrates the fact that however complex the division of labour and however advanced the technology, for most of the period the technical basis of manufacture retained significant handicraft elements. It also shows how the attitudes and customs of the artisans could block the full use of modern technologies.



*The 1923 flood, photographed by Robert Murray from his home in Earther Crescent. Not only does it show the extent of the flood (caused by a slip at Burnside which damned the Kaikorai river until it began to pour through the old railway tunnel), it also provides a rare view of Shiel's brickworks (on the right) and the Chinese market gardens which ran from the Main South Road to the brickworks. The house visible in the centre is the McIndoes'.*

In the 1890s every aspect of the work, from selecting the clay to building and firing the kilns, was hit or miss. Lambert himself kept a close eye on everything and always took charge of the firing—filthy and exhausting work. Early in the 1900s Lambert's sons took over management of the firm. They invested heavily in three electrically driven kilns and a ten-horsepower steam engine which could drive three pottery wheels, the clay-grinder and the pipe-maker. The old hands, led by old Lambert himself, opposed. 'How can a machine making one pipe at a time keep up with one making five at once?' It did, and the machines proved easy to operate. They produced pipes 'absolutely straight and all of an even length', and saved the works. However good the kilns or the machines, however, pipe-makers and

brick-makers lived by their craft skills: they had to be able to judge the manufacturing potential of clay, the wedger had to make the right decisions during pugging and produce clay without air pockets and of even texture, and the quality of the final product (no less than its cost to the firm and the customer) still depended on the moulders, throwers and cutters. In short, craft skill remained vital and the master's ability to pick men with the necessary skill became more important. If one made a mistake, as the Shiels did in picking a new source of clay in the 1930s, bankruptcy beckoned. New boilers and kilns, like conveyor belts, lessened the firm's need for labourers. Simple and repetitive tasks lent themselves to mechanisation more readily than tasks which required knowledge and judgement.<sup>43</sup>



*J. H. Lambert's Pipe Factory was taken over by his sons in 1907. One continued to live in the family house next door to the factory while the others lived elsewhere in Caversham. Photo by Reg Graham from Cyclopaedia.*

## V

How typical were Caversham's handicraft trades? Professor Gary Hawke

has made the most rigorous effort to define the extent of the handicraft trades, which he defined as work not done in a factory. The persistence of a sizeable handicraft sector in manufacturing greatly complicated his attempt to redistribute the information in the *Census* into modern analytical categories. In terms of our cultural definition of a handicraft—that is, an occupation where there is no division of labour and ‘class position’ is in large part a function of age—his manufacturing, trade and service sectors all contained sizeable handicraft components. In terms of Hawke’s definition of handicraft it is notable that there is no clear decline across the period and that the handicrafts remained strong. Within the manufacturing work-force as a whole in 1911, some 37 per cent were in Hawke’s handicraft sector and 54,453 worked in factories.<sup>44</sup> Caversham thus was not atypical. If we defined handicraft in terms of the artisan’s control of the labour process, most of Caversham’s factories were organised on handicraft principles.

The *Census* also produced tables that allow us to estimate the opportunity structure of all occupations by showing the numbers who were employers, self-employed, or working for wages. These tables only provide national aggregates, but at least they provide a broad picture of the situation.<sup>45</sup> Table 3.2 is designed to illustrate the variety and the range of differences. Because of the extraordinary number of skilled occupations no attempt has been made to include more than a few.

TABLE 3.2  
**Opportunity Ratios for Select Skilled Trades, 1902–  
 11**

		Employer	Self-employed	Worker
taxidermist	1901	1.0	8.0	2.0
	1911	1.0	8.0	7.0
wheelwright	1901	1.0	1.3	7.0

	1911	1.0	1.8	11.0
bootmaker	1901	1.0	2.4	6.0
	1911	1.0	2.8	6.0
saddler	1901	1.0	1.4	3.0
	1911	1.0	1.0	3.0
carpenter	1901	1.0	1.7	12.4
	1911	1.0	1.9	15.2
fitter	1901	1.0	0.4	14.0
	1911	1.0	0.6	14.0
boilermaker	1901	1.0	0.1	49.0
	1911	1.0	0.1	8.5

This ratio is designed to standardise the opportunity structures in order to make comparisons easier. The simplicity of the procedure is attractive, but trades such as printing, in the process of a dramatic transformation, pose problems (as they do in trying to make sense of the industrial census). For occupations disappear, new ones appear, and even when the same word is used it is often unclear whether it means the same thing.<sup>46</sup> Saddlers, taxidermists and wheelwrights typify the smaller trades; the bootmakers' ratios indicate the continuing importance of the small workshop in a trade that became a symbol of mechanisation, skill dilution and the rapid shift to factory production; while the ratios for the carpenters, boilermakers and fitters point to narrowing opportunities for self-employment. As socialists and industrial unionists began to articulate new conceptions of class based on large-scale industries (as we will see in Chapter 8), in the handicraft trades class position remained in some measure a function of age. Masters and journeymen, still widely known as artisans, were 'the people'.<sup>47</sup>

Marx would have been surprised. He thought that the handicraft mode of production had been supplanted by industrial capitalism in 1850, at least in Britain. If, following him, we define social class in terms of a common relationship to the means of production it is clear that the handicraft trades

pose a problem. In some of these trades, indeed, masters and journeymen produced goods less for profit than for use, and masters simply took the equivalent of wages. Weber's definition also fails to distinguish masters and journeymen. In crucial respects they shared a common market position and responded with unanimity to the growth of monopoly or the threat from creditors (the call for a state bank proved popular in Caversham). Apprentices occupied a distinct market position, it is true, but only for a defined period before they became adults. The ubiquity of the handicrafts confounds the structural categories traditionally used to analyse social structure in modern societies. Parsons's emphasis on a shared moral perspective and Parkin's on strategies of exclusion help to illuminate the handicrafts, but they illuminate their character as crafts. Craft, in short, cut across the grain of class. It is better thought of as a culture, something embedded in habit and thought, rather than a determining structure. What the men of the handicraft trades thought about the relative claims of craft and class, and the meaning of those words, is another matter. We will examine it fully in the last three chapters. Next, however, we must analyse the gendering of work and skill.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For a useful discussion of the idea of craft and the definition of a handicraft see Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft: The Craftsman's Role in Society*, Oxford, 1981, ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> All statistics in this chapter are based on data in the electoral rolls for the two electorates which contained the entire region between 1902 and 1922: Caversham (which became part of Dunedin South in 1908) and Dunedin Central.

<sup>3</sup> See Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft*, ch. 1 and Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*.

<sup>4</sup> The best contemporary account of these trades and the labour process in each remains Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London*, vols 4–7, London, 1893–96.

<sup>5</sup> *Official Record of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition Held at Dunedin, 1889–90*, Wellington, 1891, pp. 122–3.

<sup>6</sup> In bootmaking, repair work became increasingly important; see

transcript of Melissa Reid's interview with Mr Robert Murray, 5 Aug. 1981, pp. 1–2, History Department, OU.

[7](#) For further discussion see above pp. 162–4.

[8](#) The previous paragraphs are based on *Stone's Directory*. For the clothing industry see Clark, 'Dunedin in 1901', pp. 45–46 and Carol Brown, 'Aspects of the Clothing Industry in Dunedin, 1900–20', 452 class essay, OU, 1985.

[9](#) Transcript of Melissa Reid's interview with Robert Murray, pp. 1–3. The debate over alcohol raged; for a defence see *Otago Liberal*, 2 Sept. 1905, p. 8 and for the contemporary debate see A. R. Grigg, 'The Attack on the Citadels of Liquordom: The Prohibition Movement in New Zealand, 1894–1914', Ph.D. thesis, OU, 1978.

[10](#) This is broadly consistent with later findings; see L. D. Brian Heenan, 'Internal Migration: Inventory and Appraisal', in R. J. Warwick Neville and C. James O'Neill (eds), *The Population of New Zealand: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Auckland, 1979, pp. 68–71 and 79–81.

[11](#) John Angus, 'City and Country, Change and Continuity: Electoral Politics in Otago, 1877–1893', Ph.D. thesis, OU, 1976, p. 36 and Table 1.11.

[12](#) See Hugh Morrison, 'Property and Dwellings in Caversham', 452 class essay, OU, 1981; J. M. Boyd, 'Urban Radicals: A Study of the Radical Movement in Dunedin, 1887–1893', research thesis, OU, 1984, pp. 75–79; T. Burnard, 'Wills in Caversham', 452 class essay, OU, 1982; Claire Toynbee, 'Class and Social Structure in Nineteenth Century New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 13 (April 1979), pp. 65–82.

[13](#) On truancy see B. Goyen, 'Truancy', 452 class essay, OU, 1983 and Howard F. Lee, 'Playing the Wag: The Anatomy of Truancy; A Study of Truancy in Otago's Primary Schools, 1902–1917', M.Ed. thesis, OU, 1983.

[14](#) Apprenticeships have been ignored by historians and these comments are based largely on interviews conducted by Dr Brecher and myself in April 1987. On the apprenticeship system in general see Peter N. Stearns, *Lives of Labour: Work in a Maturing Industrial Society*, London 1975, ch. 2.

[15](#) Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft*, ch. 10, points out that in crafts which lent themselves to mechanisation, invention and design came to be separated from the actual work involved in making a product. In crafts

where this happened design manuals became popular and patents proliferated.

[16](#) The custom of ‘tramping’ does not seem to have survived but the high incidence of transience among the unmarried suggests that it survived without its name. The Labour Department’s investigation of factory production and wage rates further confirms the point for in all factory trades workers under the age of thirty-one worked considerably fewer weeks than older men; *AJHR*, 1911, H–11.

[17](#) All Dunedin’s major foundries were owned by successful masters but in 1900 all employed at least fifty men; see *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 321–4 and Angus, *The Ironmasters: The First One Hundred Years of H E Shacklock Ltd*, Dunedin, 1973 and G Methven & Company Ltd, ‘Prospectus’, 26 May 1930, Registrar of Companies, Dunedin, and the published version, kindly lent by Keith Harrison.

[18](#) For a summary of several unpublished class essays on church membership see Brooking, ‘Confessions of a Caversham Conspirator’, pp. 55–59. See also Keith Furniss, ‘The Moray Place Congregational Church’, research thesis, OU, 1975, p. 40.

[19](#) Angus, *The Ironmasters*, pp. 34–37 discusses Henry Shacklock’s close involvement in the work of his factory and pp. 44–45 the training he gave his sons.

[20](#) Olssen, ‘The “Working Class” in New Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 8 (April 1974), p. 55.

[21](#) Mary Isabella Lee, *The Not So Poor: An Autobiography*, ed. Annabel Cooper, Auckland, 1992, p. 106.

[22](#) Carol Brown, ‘Aspects of the Clothing Industry, 1900–1920’ and Megan Adams, ‘The Printing Industry and Linotype Technology’, 452 class essay, OU, 1985. See also Department of Labour, *Awards, Agreements, Orders etc. of the Court of Arbitration* (hereafter *Awards*), v. 1 (1894–1900), pp. 155–9 (for the Wellington linotype operators’ award, which was later granted in Christchurch and Dunedin); and pp. 200–8 (for the Canterbury bootmakers’ award which was later granted in Dunedin). In both industries the men had only gone before the Court in order to control the new machines.

[23](#) This conclusion was arrived at by Carol Brown, on the basis of oral interviews. Shops and shop assistants also remained ununionised; see Joe

Smith, 'Legislation Affecting Shop Assistants', 452 class essay OU, 1985.

[24](#) Adams, 'The Printing Industry'.

[25](#) Contemporaries often commented on these examples; see 'Engineering and Kindred Industries: Report of Mr M. P. Cameron ...', *AJHR*, 1911, H-2, p. 2 and the annual reports of the Labour Department, *AJHR*, 1900-22, H-11.

[26](#) ODT, 6 Jan. 1951 and Death Register, Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Dunedin.

[27](#) Probate 2320, Dunedin High Court and Death Register.

[28](#) The Death Register was searched for all of them and the Probate numbers were: Rutherford, 18892; Wilkinson, 789/56; Cowie, 11354; Todd, 24314; and Bartlett, 24085. I am indebted to Jim McAloon for the information about Sidey and Dawson.

[29](#) James F. Neil, *The New Zealand Family Herb Doctor*, Dunedin, 1889 and Death Register.

[30](#) Many commentators bemoaned the increasing difficulty in recruiting apprentices for the 'dirtier' trades. For the dentists see T. W. H. Brooking, *A History of Dentistry in New Zealand*, Dunedin, 1980, ch. 3, and pp. 48-51 for Sidey.

[31](#) The quotations in this paragraph are from Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft*, pp. 208-9. See also Edward Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, New York, 1976, and for further discussion, above pp. 188-94.

[32](#) For background see R. Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*, Oxford, 1976 and *The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-Century Britain, c. 1850-1900*, London, 1981. See also T. R. Tholfsen, *Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England*, London, 1976. G. S. Bradley, 'The Otago Trades and Labour Council, 1880-1886', research thesis, OU, 1974, p.76, noted the number of Freethought Association members active in the Trades Council.

[33](#) For a fuller discussion of Lister's views see above, pp. 171-3 and my essay in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, 1870-1900, Wellington, 1992, pp. 272-3. See too A. Birchall, 'Sam Lister and the Otago Workman', 452 class essay, OU, 1981.

[34](#) Peter Stewart, *Type of a Century: 100 Years of Trade Unionism in the Printing Industry in Otago*, Dunedin, 1974; J. Hynes, 'The Otago

Typographers' Association, 1898–1914', 360 class essay, OU, 1979; and Adams, 'The Printing Industry'.

[35](#) Angus, *The Ironmasters*, pp. 14–15.

[36](#) *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[37](#) *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[38](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

[39](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 35–37 and Furniss, 'The Moral Place Congregational Church', p. 40.

[40](#) Angus, *The Ironmasters*, pp. 40–42.

[41](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 43–45.

[42](#) R. Calder, 'Brick-making in Dunedin, 1890–1920'; E. M. Seed, 'The History of the Brick, Tile and Pottery Industries in Otago', MA thesis, OU, 1954; and transcripts of interviews between Louise Tallentire and Mr G. Shiel, 1980 and Adair Bruorton and Miss G. J. Shiel, 29 May 1980, History Department, OU.

[43](#) Seed, pp. 85–101.

[44](#) Hawke, 'Disaggregation of the New Zealand Labour Force 1871–1936', Victoria University of Wellington (hereafter VUW) Working Papers in Economic History, 79/1 (Jan. 1979), Tables 8 and 9, pp. 28–31.

[45](#) Angus, 'City and Country', Table 1.11, first used this technique.

[46](#) *Stone's Directory* and the *Census* both reveal, at the local and national levels respectively, the changing occupational structure; the best analysis is P. M. Meuli, 'Occupational Change and Bourgeois Proliferation: A Study of the New Middle-class Expansion in New Zealand, 1896–1926', MA thesis, VUW, 1977.

[47](#) Eric Hobsbawm, 'Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?', *Economic History Review*, v. 37 (1984), p. 356, has claimed that it is misleading to use the word artisan in the British context. As we shall see in Ch. 7, it remained in use here.


## CHAPTER 4

### *Skilled Women Workers*

The women and men who settled on The Flat in the 1870s brought with them languages of class and skill which were complicated, ambiguous and multi-layered. Although class theory, like labour history, has frequently confined women to the occasional footnote, 'There is no choice', as Joan Scott has pointed out, 'between a focus on class or on gender; each is necessarily incomplete without the other.'<sup>1</sup> By the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, the concept of 'worker' excluded those who did not sell their labour within a free labour market. This defined women's work as something other than work, unless they entered into market relations. Working man could be one word; working woman could not. In time, this meant that nobody who used the phrase 'working class' thought of women as a member, except through their relationships with fathers or husbands. The phrase working classes, by contrast, allowed women who sold their labour to be considered one of those classes. As a consequence the language of class which became normative by the end of World War I pivoted on the exclusion of the feminine no less than the exclusion of women. Class, in short, assumed a masculine identity. It is not clear that women in Caversham worried much about this exclusion, yet it had important consequences for them when they did sell their labour.<sup>2</sup>

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*Cookery books proliferated early in the century as domesticity was re-defined as a science. The availability of gas and electricity also created new culinary standards and expectations. Home management became a full-time occupation although family size declined rapidly.*

The concept of skill also assumed a masculine identity in Caversham. Few women workers were skilled. As soon as we say that, however, we are reminded that the idea of skill was socially constructed in ways that excluded women's domestic work. Anyone who has baked, preserved, made jams and pickles, sewed and knitted, let alone tried to organise a household, knows that a high level of skill is required. In various exhibitions and shows women exhibited macramé, crochet work, quilts, cloaks, chemises, cushions and curtains, lace work and a wide variety of ornaments. During debates on the cost of living in 1908–11 most union leaders readily acknowledged the importance of the wife's skill in determining the family's welfare.<sup>3</sup> During the war everyone acknowledged the importance of these skills in keeping the New Zealand Expeditionary

Force in the field.<sup>4</sup> They had in mind not only domestic skills but those involved in managing finances, buying wisely and managing the household economy (which might include earning additional income by taking in washing or lodgers). Wives also ran the kitchen farm—chooks and even the occasional cow which grazed along some of Caversham's streets—although by 1900 husbands usually took responsibility for the vegetable garden and wives tended the flower garden. During hard times, when a husband's income might fall even though he kept his job, married women supervised the 'economy of makeshift', improvising ways of finding food or earning money, organising attempts to obtain charitable assistance, and even going without food. Such tasks had been undertaken by married women in Europe since at least the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, as governments attempted to gather information about national wealth and income, they measured the productivity of households. They assumed that the married woman's contribution was just as important as her husband's. By the late nineteenth century most governments in the English-speaking world denied that women's domestic work could, properly speaking, be described as productive work. The reclassification of domestic work as unproductive implicitly called into question not just its status as work, but also any recognition that it might require skill. Married women, once widely seen as key figures in the household economy, came to be seen as dependent, along with the sick, the elderly and the young. Real work, i.e. productive work, was now defined as work done for payment in money and only by those involved in the labour market. The labour market, by definition, excluded the household; only individuals could be productive. The moral elevation of the home coincided with the devaluation of work done at home and the marginalisation of those who did that work.<sup>6</sup>

The picture conveyed in *Stone's Directory* reflects this reworking of the ideology of gender. As a rule the *Directory* ignored women unless they headed a household. In 1908, for instance, the *Directory* listed 215 women in Caversham as heads of household (about 11 per cent of the total number of heads). Of these, twenty-seven ran a small business. In most cases the business had been inherited from a master draper or grocer, but exceptions existed. In 1901, for example, *Stone's 'Trades Directory'* listed Mrs C. H.

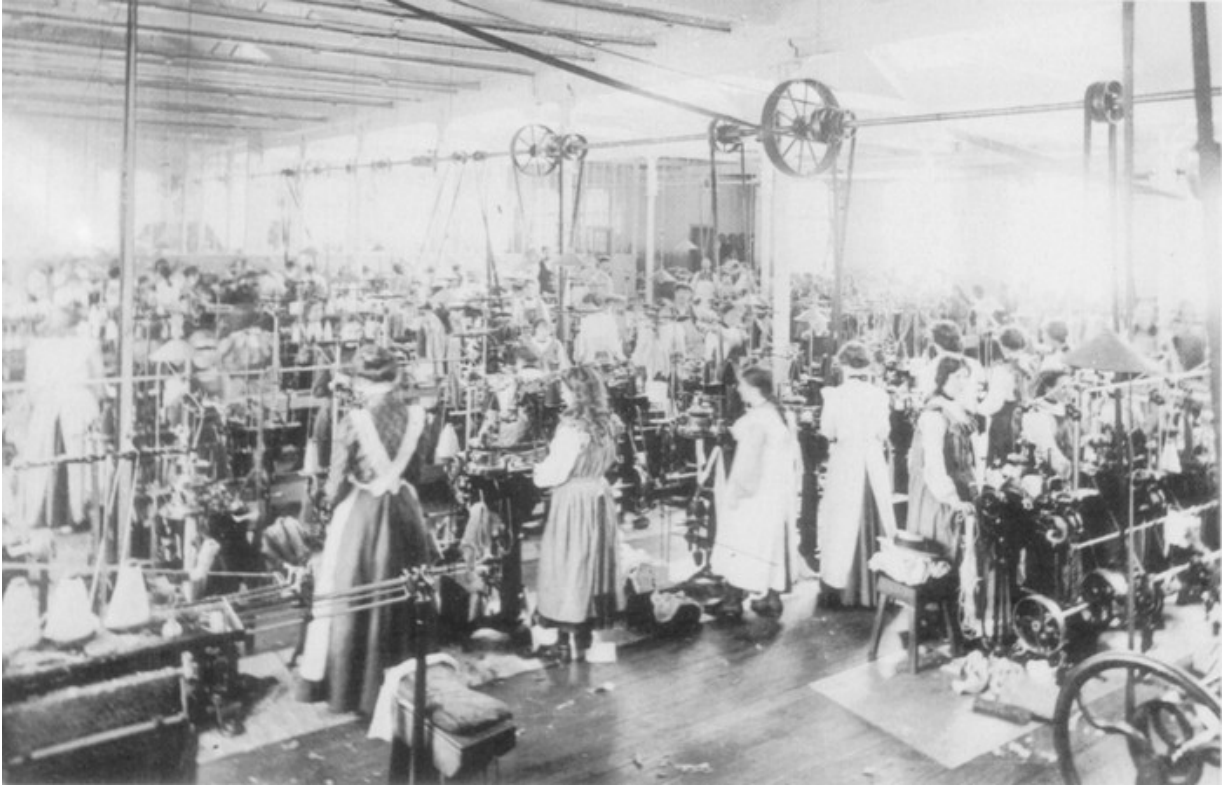
Rogerson as a bootmaker, although it is not clear whether she practised the trade or simply continued to run the business. Young women obtained new opportunities in the clothing factories during the 1880s and white-collar occupations from 1900 onwards, but the great majority accepted their sex as their destiny.<sup>7</sup> In 1902 the electoral roll for Caversham revealed that just over 79 per cent of all women (over the age of twenty-one) were married or engaged in 'domestic duties' (60 per cent and 19.4 per cent respectively). The local Registrar of Electors—a man—had been trying to tidy up these statistics since he took office. By 1905 he had succeeded in listing 96.4 per cent of all women in terms of their marital status (aided, no doubt, by the Caversham Registrar). The electoral rolls for 1922 listed 99.2 per cent of all adult women in Caversham as married or single. Only the occupation of boarding-house keeper survived this ideological reworking.<sup>8</sup>



*Richard Hudson's biscuit factory provided a number of jobs for unskilled women. Hocken Library.*

Despite this ideologically driven reclassification, the pattern revealed in

the 1902 electoral roll survived: about 40 per cent of all women eligible to vote worked for money and many of those aged between fifteen and twenty-one also worked outside the home. The sizeable number of 'gainfully employed' young single women who belonged to the Miriam Rebekah lodge of the IOOF, not to mention those employed at the Wax Vesta factory, suggest that the disappearance of working women from the electoral rolls reflects no more than the operation of this new ideological preference for domesticity (at least among male public servants). At the national level, the growth in the number of young and unmarried women entering the labour market across the period 1880–1922 further strengthens scepticism. So does the declining proportion of women in domestic service.<sup>9</sup> Not that women had access to trades defined as skilled, except in the clothing industry and to a lesser extent the food industry (for the latter largely reverted to conditions of domestic production in the colony). In Britain, of course, women had been excluded from most apprenticeships since the end of the sixteenth century, although they had some trades of their own in which they regularly took on apprentices. 'Most of these were associated with the production and distribution of food and clothing', jobs that women had traditionally done.<sup>10</sup> In Britain, as a rule, women who sold their labour received less for doing the same work (usually between one-third and one-half the male rate).<sup>11</sup> A similar but smaller differential operated here.



*The woollen mills and the clothing factories provided paid work for women from Caversham. This photo shows the Roslyn Woollen Mills, opened in 1879, which stood in Kaikorai Valley on the other side of the Mornington ridge (it would have taken the best part of an hour to get there from Caversham). The factory produced woollens and worsteds. The Cyclopaedia (p. 339) pointed to the savings bank and benefit scheme for workers, the 'comfortable dining room and well-appointed ... lavatories' and the high standard of cleanliness and ventilation. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

## I

According to most scholars the industrial revolution separated home from work by destroying household production. Some have also argued that the industrial revolution threatened the social and cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity by disrupting the pre-industrial gendering of the division of labour.<sup>12</sup> Historians of the first industrial revolution have almost certainly exaggerated the speed and uniformity of the separation of home and work, not to mention the disruption of gender roles. True, in trades such as carpentry, home and work had been separated since the early nineteenth century (although many married carpenters had a workshop at home). Master joiners and furniture-makers, by contrast, often worked and lived in the same building until late in the nineteenth century. Their families

remained an important source of labour. In trades where subcontracting was endemic before the introduction of compulsory arbitration, such as bootmaking and clothing, workers could and usually did work at home. One reason why the clothing trades—which include dressmaking, hat-making, millinery, embroidery and needlework—continued to appeal to women was, quite simply, that the work could be combined with traditional domestic responsibilities, and children could assist. The high incidence of truancy among the children of the self-employed and small employers suggests the tension between the needs of household production and parental enthusiasm for their children's education.<sup>13</sup>

Pre-industrial attitudes to the gendering of the division of labour proved remarkably persistent and resilient in Caversham. The skilled migrants from Britain who settled there in the 1860s and 1870s may have hoped that migration would allow them to retain domestic and handicraft production, escape the factories and still improve their material lot.<sup>14</sup> E. G. Wakefield's vision of a pre-industrial society may have appealed to artisans and masters because of their own fears of the consequences of industrialisation. Wakefield's plan certainly promised to reverse three consequences of the first industrial revolution: the destruction of independent masters, increasing poverty and destitution and the separation of work from home. Others, including Otago's most popular poets, John Barr and Thomas Bracken, voiced similar hopes although they also voiced, unlike Wakefield, a 'strongly egalitarian idealism ...'.<sup>15</sup> Prophets like Thomas Carlyle and novelists like Charles Dickens may have been more influential than Wakefield among the steerage passengers, but they (and many others) expressed nostalgia for the past and ambivalence about industrialisation. What women thought is unclear, but those brought up within the subculture of the household handicrafts may well have shared the same hopes and fears as their menfolk. The legal and cultural imperatives of patriarchy followed them to the New World but they would have been bound by them anyway, and the New World offered them some opportunity to challenge the more irksome patriarchal forms. With household production they could at least remain effective partners.

In many skilled trades wives also helped their husbands, and husbands working at home could also assist with such domestic work as child

minding (parents expected children to help them from a very young age). It is misleading to talk of wives helping, however, for, under the conditions of household production, husband and wife constituted a productive unit and it made no sense to differentiate their contributions. Census takers may have reclassified women's work as 'non-productive' in the late nineteenth century, but popular attitudes changed more slowly and may well have disputed the new official ideology. In this quasi-rural industrial borough, as in pre-industrial Europe, 'The family was the unit of production ..., the household ... the locus of work and residence.'<sup>16</sup> Young men in handicraft trades looked for wives who could assist them with aspects of their work, quite apart from the customary domestic skills. Even if the skilled man worked in a factory and his wife could no longer assist with his wage-earning work, he still preferred to find a wife capable of managing the household and earning extra income. Railway workers invariably referred to marriage as 'going into double harness'.

Young women seem to have wanted steady and reliable husbands. In Europe, we should remember, men in some jobs, such as dockers and sailors, traditionally had not married.<sup>17</sup> In the colony, which spawned feckless men, friends and neighbours sometimes took it upon themselves to warn young women 'that he's a very selfish and a very spoilt boy'.<sup>18</sup> If young women dreamed not of wage-earning careers but of having their own families and owning their own homes, or at least being mistress in their own house, then they needed sober, thrifty and steady husbands to achieve that dream. It may well be that home ownership offered women the same autonomy and independence that journeymen aspired to when they set up as masters. Such a comment remains somewhat speculative, although owning one's home became more and more widespread across this period. One historian concluded that many young couples from skilled backgrounds would not marry until they had saved enough to take possession of a home of their own.<sup>19</sup>

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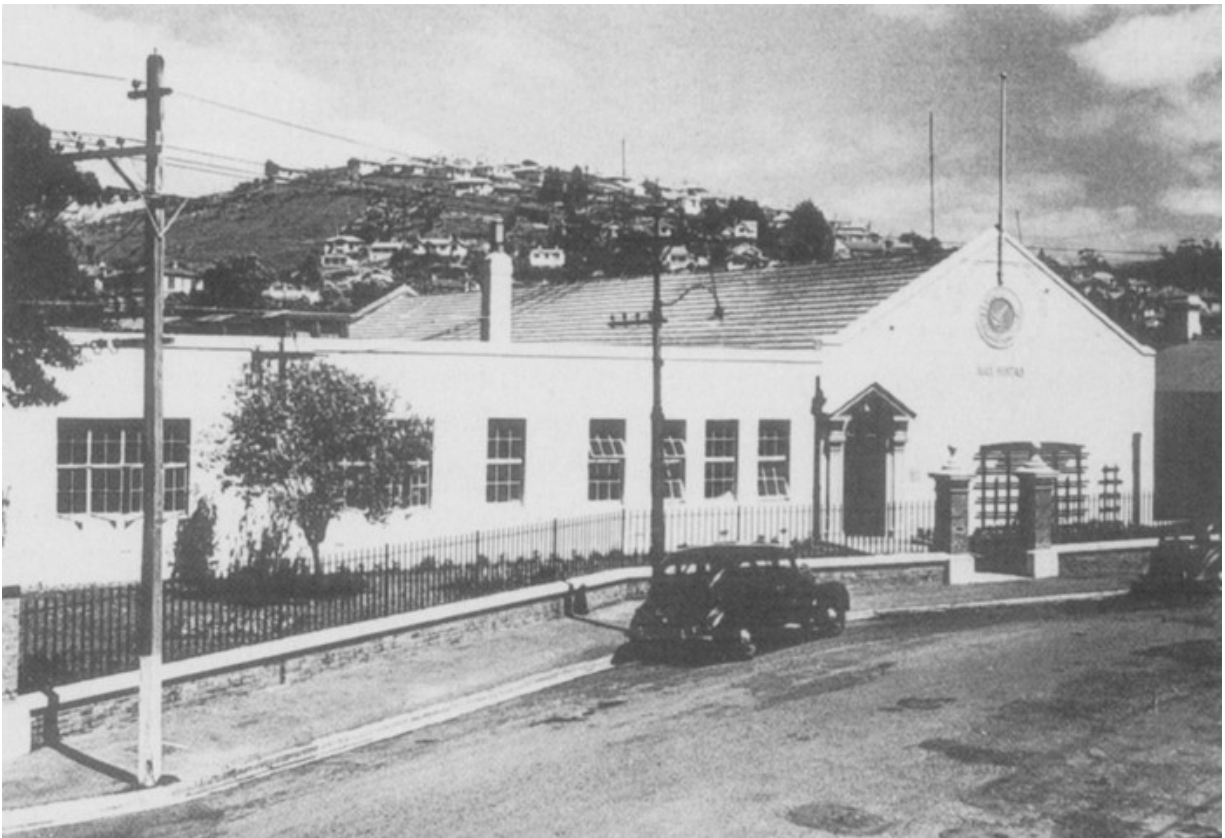
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*New technologies made the housewife more productive and saved families money. Between 1880 and 1895 over 115,000 sewing and knitting machines were imported from Britain and the United States. Most machines had such features as a bobbin winder, hemmer, quilter, binder, gatherer, tuck maker, and a braiding foot. Lock-stitch machines were also available. Hand-driven machines gave way increasingly to treadle ones. Sketcher, no. 5, 1915.*

The small size of New Zealand and its population, together with the continuing importance of local markets, allowed many household handicrafts to survive long after their extinction in Britain.<sup>20</sup> In some respects the first industrial revolution arrived in Dunedin only in the 1880s, when factory production became dominant in some industries. The second

industrial revolution, characterised by high-quality steel tools and new forms of energy, notably electricity, came hard on its heels.<sup>21</sup> Both revolutions threatened to destabilise parts of the sexual division of labour by reducing the skill necessary to produce an increasing range of products. Less skilled labour now had its chance. Women—usually young and single—began to find new opportunities. Many employers preferred to hire women because they cost less than unskilled men and could be laid off with less difficulty. During the ‘Long Depression’, which lasted in Dunedin from 1879 until 1896, women poured into the workforce and especially the clothing factories.<sup>22</sup> The shift to large-scale factory production which created these jobs worried the men less than the substitution of boys for journeymen in workshops, largely because women had always made clothing.<sup>23</sup> For the most part, however, Caversham women who sold their labour worked either in the clothing factories in the city, the handful of local tailors’ shops, dressmaking and millinery shops (usually owned and run by women), or in the Wax Vesta factory.



*The Wax Vesta factory, c. 1948, was an important source of employment for women, though the jobs were all ‘unskilled’. Hocken Library.*

Widening employment opportunities for unmarried women, especially in the white-collar sector, reduced the proportion in domestic service throughout New Zealand from 50 per cent in 1881 to 25 per cent in 1911. From the late 1890s onwards young women sought the education that would equip them for the new white-collar opportunities. They stayed longer at school, and longer than boys, on average, for whom there were wider occupational choices. Young girls voted with their feet in favour of commercial courses.<sup>24</sup> This pattern contributed to shortages of female labour for Dunedin's clothing factories and helped reduce the male/female wage differential. In New Zealand a woman's average wage rose between 1880 and 1910, from roughly 50 per cent to 60 per cent of a man's wage.<sup>25</sup> Membership of the IOOF's Miriam Rebekah lodge suggests that the young women of The Flat were to the fore in abandoning 'domestic duties' for clerical and secretarial jobs. Even within the factories, male/female wage differentials were smaller in Dunedin than they were nationwide.<sup>26</sup> Even unskilled young women in the Wax Vesta factory earned more than male apprentices of the same age, at least until the young men came out of their time. When they married, however, women almost invariably left the labour market and usually returned only if widowed or deserted, although the wives of unskilled men often had to find another source of income and quite a few worked at the Wax Vesta factory.



*The New Zealand Clothing Company employed large numbers of young women in the office. Skilled manual workers tended to look down on 'pen pushers' and women's invasion of the office gave them another reason to feel superior. Hocken Library.*

The gendered segmentation of the labour market has been explained in various ways. Most explanations invoke either class (employers) or patriarchy (men).<sup>27</sup> Employers rarely objected to hiring cheap labour, yet in Caversham masters shared the community's views about which work was women's and which men's. Nor did women compete for men's jobs. Besides, according to the Department of Labour, in this period the clothing industry could not obtain enough women workers. By 1910 the same problem existed in the bootmaking and woollen industries.<sup>28</sup> The buoyant labour market probably reinforced the gendered segmentation of jobs. There is no evidence that women tried to enter apprenticeships in traditionally male trades. Even if they had, protective legislation governing the hours they could work and the conditions that they needed would have made it hard for them to compete with young men (as some complained when inspectors tried to enforce the 1873 Employment of Females Act). The 1891 Factory Act and subsequent amendments, especially those of

1894 and 1896, limited the usefulness of women workers still more.<sup>29</sup> For all that, the men of the skilled unions ran no risks, as they doubtless knew of trends in other countries. Between 1896 and 1901 many skilled unions went before the Arbitration Court to seek a clause making it impossible for women to enter their trades. In 1904, after hearing several cases, the Arbitration Court ruled that no woman could be employed in any industry covered by an award unless specific provision had been made for her employment.<sup>30</sup> At the time this led to no debates, and no champion of women's rights ever complained. Nor did the young women of Caversham.

Skilled men had many reasons for developing strategies to exclude women, just as they did for excluding unskilled men and racial minorities.<sup>31</sup> Under conditions of handicraft production control over access to apprenticeships allowed them to protect their jobs and control the labour process. The first and second industrial revolutions threatened this control, thus endangering their livelihood, their pride in their skill, their pride in their work, their control over the pace of production, their control over the method of production and their own sense of their masculinity.<sup>32</sup> Metaphors of manhood resound in union and radical rhetoric throughout this period. To the patriarchs of the skilled trades—whether masters or men—that rhetoric articulated one of their deepest fears. Male competitors could be fought openly but women could not; yet contemporary evidence from Britain suggested that women were often desperate for work, willing to take lower wages, less concerned about conditions and happy to be used as pawns by employers anxious to lower costs, dilute skills, or simply weaken the craft's position. Within the handicraft sector and even those industries which had emerged from handicraft origins, such as bootmaking, masters accepted the journeymen's views on the 'natural' division between men's and women's work.



*Probably most young women preferred working with large numbers of other women. The factories provided company, solidarity and support, and a rich social life. These young women from Hudson's Biscuit Factory are at the staff picnic, 1899. Hocken Library.*

One imagines that most of their wives and daughters also accepted that division as 'natural'. Their daughters were not necessarily immune to the contagion of the contemporary women's movement but accepted marriage as their destiny and looked for work appropriate to their sex, such as teaching or nursing.<sup>33</sup> Most young girls in the area learned to cook and sew from either their mothers or a female relative. Senior girls at Caversham School went to the Macandrew Road School once a fortnight to learn cooking and home science (the boys learnt woodwork). Most women from skilled families knew how to sew, knit and embroider. Mastery of those skills commanded respect and even admiration. Several sources show that young girls often caught the excitement. Mrs Ruby Lyon, who grew up in a large house near Rutherford's shop, recalled her intense pleasure in visiting 'Agnes and Jessie Alexander [in the city], Agnes being a dressmaker. Agnes would be busy sewing, and she would have a bundle of all sorts of pretty material, beads and ribbons, for me to take home.'<sup>34</sup> The worlds of men and

women existed in parallel.



*Young girls learnt the skills of home management, food production and mothering from their own mothers and aunts. After 1900 school supplemented this training. The photo shows a class at Caversham School in 1901. Hocken Library.*

## II

In our period, women invaded many occupations and industries, some of them once monopolised by men.<sup>35</sup> In manufacturing, however, women broke into few new occupations. As Table 4.1 reveals, women lost ground in the manufacturing sector during the late 1890s but regained it when expansion occurred early this century. The proportion of women employed in textiles and clothing also fell, and fell for longer, but the trend reversed itself in the ten years after 1906. More to the point, however, while the names of large firms (especially Ross and Glendinning and Hallenstein's New Zealand Clothing Company) are associated with the clothing industry, small workshops dominated the industry. Women constituted 60 per cent of the workforce in tailoring and the average factory employed less than ten

persons. Dressmaking and millinery employed no males but, in 1905, some 5,775 women. The average workshop employed just over six women, and a high proportion of dressmakers and milliners worked in establishments so small that they did not meet the rather modest requirements of the Factory Act.<sup>36</sup>

TABLE 4.1  
**Women in Selected Dunedin Manufacturing Industries\***

Industry	1894	1900	1906	1912	1915
clothing	550	314	266	433	437
dressmaking & millinery	411	185	479	699	833
shirt-making	77	99	119	178	144
tailoring	225	183	196	256	252
waterproofing	55	60	12		
wool milling	316	165	184	588	575
hat- & cap-making	5	17	88	84	101
hosiery	108	253	164	19	21
sub-total	1,747	1,276	1,508	2,257	2,363
other manufacturing	294	512	1,726	1,309	890
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,041</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>3,234</b>	<b>3,566</b>	<b>3,253</b>

\* Unwin, 'Women in New Zealand Industry', p. 122 (taken from *AJHR*, H-11).

Women had an established foothold in many industries and might have extended their position when mechanisation occurred (as they did in many other societies). The male unions and the Court confined women to certain trades and to certain positions within trades. To what extent the effectiveness of this confinement made factory work and skilled trades less attractive to women cannot be known. Is it entirely coincidental that employers in the clothing, woollen and bootmaking industries bemoaned the shortage of women workers while young women poured into ununionised white-collar jobs?<sup>37</sup> Even the war did not expand opportunities for women in skilled men's trades. Instead, retired men came back, men were recruited from less essential industries, 'skilled labourers' moved on to skilled work and all the men worked more overtime.<sup>38</sup> In 1916, as the shortage of labour became acute in some industries because of the need to

supply the New Zealand Expeditionary Force with more and more men, the Court began permitting the employment of women in men's work, but insisted on equal pay.<sup>39</sup> In 1917 the Efficiency Board urged that employers substitute women for men in skilled trades.<sup>40</sup> The Court did not take the Efficiency Board's hint. In 1918, despite the impact of conscription, the Court held that even where no special provision had been made in an award for women workers, employers had to pay them the same wages as men.<sup>41</sup> Equal pay effectively excluded women, and the Court could now achieve exclusion by ignoring the issue. It continued to do so after the war.<sup>42</sup> In industries where women had 'traditionally' worked, the Court usually imposed a ratio of females to males and specified the jobs that could be undertaken by the 'weaker' sex.<sup>43</sup> The Court's decisions never attracted criticism, presumably because they reflected a powerful social consensus 'that certain classes of work are eminently suited to females ...'.<sup>44</sup>



*The New Zealand Clothing Company factory opened on Dowling Street (five minutes' walk from the Exchange) in 1883. Many young women from all parts of Caversham were among the 300-odd employees. Ross and Glendining also had three factories near the Exchange which employed large numbers of young women. Hocken Library.*

When women had a foothold in an occupation or industry ‘traditionally’ dominated by men, they still faced discrimination. In 1890, for instance, the Dunedin Operative Bootmakers’ Union told women machinists and fitters to form their own union. Later, when the men did condescend (in their own interests) to organise the women, they placed them in a separate and subordinate branch.<sup>45</sup> A generation later unions and their members still thought it ‘an anomaly ... that young girls of any age should be admitted to membership of the union with the full rights of an ordinary adult member’.<sup>46</sup> Wherever the Court compelled unions to organise women, as it sometimes did in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations, the union established separate branches for women and excluded them from decision-making.<sup>47</sup> The exclusion of women from a union meant that the preference clause, which most unions enjoyed by 1911, also excluded them from the industry. The Court thus not only helped stabilise and preserve the pre-industrial craft system, but stabilised and preserved the sexual division of labour. The unions of skilled men had, in short, captured the arbitration system to exclude those groups—women, racial minorities and unskilled men—who might have threatened their craft control. In other societies such groups spearheaded ‘dilution’.

Some historians have argued that the British working class articulated a new ideology of gender roles when confronted with the first industrial revolution.<sup>48</sup> As the growth of factory methods destroyed domestic handicrafts and education became compulsory, skilled men lost their right to use family labour. They quickly responded by demanding the right to a ‘family wage’, that is, a wage sufficient to support a wife and children in decency and comfort. The family thus became a fulcrum in the push for higher living standards and a reason for resisting lower wages. As the unions made progress in winning a ‘family wage’, working-class families continued to operate as economic units even though the wife’s major roles became motherhood and home management. By 1900 this idea had become normative. This reconceptualisation of gender roles both incorporated and elaborated that earlier ideological construction, the ‘cult of true womanhood’, or, to use the title of Coventry Patmore’s poem, ‘The Angel in the House’.<sup>49</sup> In some respects, however, this process reflected the democratisation of an older aristocratic ideal.<sup>50</sup>

In New Zealand after 1900 the unions of skilled men increasingly demanded a family wage. It may well be, as some have argued, that the idea of a family wage reconciled the demands of patriarchy and capitalism, but there is no evidence that this worried anybody then (although lodges sometimes debated the issue).<sup>51</sup> Developments in Australia hastened and legitimised the demand. The new Commonwealth charged its fledgling Arbitration Court with defining a 'fair and reasonable' wage. The first judge interpreted this as a mandate to define a 'living wage' for an unskilled man's family of 'about five persons'.<sup>52</sup> New Zealand's unions of unskilled took up the same refrain. Rising expectations—for housing, clothing, leisure—fuelled the campaign. The Liberal Government accepted the justice of the cry and gave the lowest-paid railway workers a 'living wage' in 1908. Despite the lack of relevant statistics, the Arbitration Court had also begun to fumble towards a similar policy. Justice William Sim, president of the New Zealand Court from the end of 1906 until 1914, decided in 1908 that 'anything less than 7s per day is not a living wage where the worker has to maintain a wife and children'. He then set a minimum rate of eight shillings per day for unskilled men.<sup>53</sup>

By 1910 observers believed that 'the theory of fair wages that appears to prevail is the doctrine of the living wage ...', which meant 'a decent living according to the colonial standard' for each worker and his family.<sup>54</sup> As an American academic pointed out after interviewing the Court's members in 1912, Justice Sim accepted a 'living wage' for a man and his family and tried to 'adjust wages in line with price increases'. The absence of any reliable statistics about the cost of living made it impossible, as Sim complained, to determine real wages, but he and his two assessors listened to interminable anecdotal evidence about the subject and did their best.<sup>55</sup> Most debates before the Court centred on the cost of living and it became such an explosive political issue that the Liberal Government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the subject on the eve of the 1911 elections. One clear consequence of the concept of a 'living wage' for a family, however, was that women's pay rates were appreciably lower than those for men. By and large the Court set wages for women within its jurisdiction at between half and two-thirds of the male rate. This may have represented an improvement over the ratios set by the unregulated market.

In any case nobody in New Zealand protested.<sup>56</sup>

### III

Skilled male workers did not believe that women should do the work of men and their union leaders joined the campaign to train all girls for domesticity and motherhood.<sup>57</sup> Yet their daughters continued to seek employment as part of the family's wage economy and, if the husband died, their widows had to make a living while supporting a family. Two brief biographical sketches will help illustrate the ways in which the ethos of the skilled men influenced their daughters and wives. Both sketches are largely based on autobiographies of women abandoned by feckless husbands.

Mary Isabella Taylor's parents were Scots and both from skilled homes. After serving in the 72nd Highlanders in India for seven years, her father returned to Scotland and worked on the railroad before marrying and migrating to New Zealand (an uncle 'had made a fair Pile [in Auckland] & gone home again ...').<sup>58</sup> The family arrived in October 1877 when Mary was six years old. After three days in the Caversham Immigration Barracks the family moved to Oamaru (Mary's father had a sister in Caversham and a brother in Oamaru). Mary's father, 'a Compitent Baker' (who seems not to have served an apprenticeship), moved around North Otago and South Canterbury in search of regular work. He had a number of relations in the province who doubtless advised about local conditions and provided short-term accommodation. Often he left his wife and children behind, or they stayed behind. Mother, who had another child during these years, was 'the kind of woman who could Boss any husband'. She also drank heavily and was often drunk for weeks on end, sometimes attacking her daughter savagely and occasionally being beaten by her outraged husband, 'a steady man but fiery tempered'.<sup>59</sup> In the 1880s the family headed south as Mary's father sought work in Otago and Southland.

As in many families, relations between the parents complicated the children's lives. Mary thought that her mother disliked her and preferred her sons. Mary's father may have favoured her. In any case, he bought her a Singer sewing machine when she was eleven, possibly in the hope that she would learn to sew and possibly to annoy his wife.<sup>60</sup> The father was often

away for long periods, however, and during one of these absences her mother apprenticed Mary—then twelve years old—to ‘Smith & Smiths the Dress Makers in Esk st.’, Invercargill. When it became clear that apprentices were not paid for the first year, her mother put her into service. ‘I Eventually earned my Living for 40 years at Sewing—But those 3 weeks were all the proper traineing I ever had—the Next work was Looking after 5 Children—3 of Whom were bigger than myself.’ A succession of other service jobs followed.<sup>61</sup> When Mary’s father returned home he took her out of service, banned her from working and sent her back to school. Patriarchal authority did not survive the patriarch’s departure in search of work. ‘But not to be outdone [as soon as father left] my Mother took 2 dresses In to make & on the Strength of my 3 weeks training I was made to do them. The first was for a woman Old Enough to be my Grannie & i had to Stand up on a chair to fit the Bodiss on ....’ In short she learnt on the job, although her mother may have taught her more than Mary later cared to remember.

In 1885 Mary found her father a job as baker in Woodlands, a town she fondly remembered. Although most of the domestic responsibilities fell on her—‘the youngest child of my Mothers Family was born’—she enjoyed that period. ‘It was in Woodlands i got my Liking for all kinds of Sewing & fancy work & The Liking has never lift me ....’ A stint in the Mataura “Paper Mill” makeing Envelopes & Paper Bags’ may have taught her the unpleasantness of factories and unskilled work. While in Mataura, Mary began attending the Church of Christ and meetings of the newly arrived, and noisy, Salvation Army.<sup>62</sup>

In 1887, hearing that one Alexander Taylor had been burnt to death in ‘a Big fire In dunedin’, Mother and children headed north. They went to Aunt Nellie’s house in Caversham ‘& There was father ...’. ‘Well we got a house in Caversham & it was While liveing there that I got to know Mrs W. H. Reynolds of Montecillo ... & from then till the Day of her Death in 1928 She was the Best friend of myself & Children.’ Mrs Rachel Reynolds belonged to Dunedin’s social elite. Her father had been one of the province’s pioneering runholders in West Otago and her husband was one of Dunedin’s leading merchant-politicians. She lived in a grand house on Eglinton Road, overlooking The Flat. Rachel Reynolds had been born on an

isolated sheep run in Australia and had learned as a child to handle a stock-whip and deal with the crises of life on the pastoral frontier. In the 1880s she became a prominent champion of women's rights. She helped to found the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the kindergarten movement and played a prominent role in organising the Tailoresses' Union in 1889–90. Within a few days of meeting Mary Taylor, Mrs Reynolds had arranged work for her. She now had prominent clients, including 'Mrs Alex Bathgate, of the Glen, ... and Mrs Justice Gillis [sic] & Mrs Barr of Eglinton Road', all neighbours and relatives of the Reynolds. This then was another dimension to the small and local society—the opportunity to find wealthy and useful patrons. Because of this experience 'i was Begining to have a Bit of Respect for myself ...'. After her mother assaulted her again, self respect created a fulcrum for action. With some encouragement from church friends, she ran away from home. Although her mother soon found her, and came each evening to claim 'my days earnings', Mary was happy.<sup>[63](#)</sup>



*Rachel Reynolds. Otago Early Settlers' Association.*

Mary Taylor's eyesight—always poor after being attacked by her mother at the age of ten—deteriorated. She entered Dr Lindo Ferguson's ward at the Public Hospital (he was one of the city's most prominent doctors). 'I was Thier for 7 month's & getting Blinder every Day.' Even after leaving hospital she could not see properly for another two years. Some people advised her to abandon sewing for housework but she refused, because 'i liked the Sewing Best. But you can be sure I tried my best to be able to see somehow, to be independent—and I kept on trying and gathered Blue Gum

leaves and boiled them and bathed my eyes three times a day ....' 'Mr Neil, the Herbalist, and his family' had become good friends through the church, and he may have suggested the cure.<sup>64</sup> After leaving hospital, Mary joined her parents in a township in northern Southland. But the passion for independence, and for the health necessary to sustain it, reflected one of the most powerful imperatives in the subculture of skilled workers. Their skill was not only essential to their economic independence but lay at the heart of their self-respect and identity.

To obtain independence from her parents, however, Mary took the drastic (but probably not unusual) step of marrying.<sup>65</sup> Alfredo Lee, her husband, soon proved to be a wayward and feckless man. 'If he could only have left the Drink & Cards alone things would have gone all right.' After a couple of years, pregnant with her second baby, she packed her things and headed for her circle of friends on The Flat. She lived with her mother in Grosvenor Street, South Dunedin, for six weeks and later found a small cottage in Athol Place, not far from the Dunedin railway station. She also found work sewing for 'Mr and Mrs J. P. Maitland (he was Commissioner for Crown Lands), Mrs Dr Ogston, Dr and Mrs Colquhoun and Dr and Mrs Hocken—he was a funny little chap, and they had a lovely home ...'.<sup>66</sup> She had other wealthy clients, including the Misses Wimperis, one of whom used to paint Mary and her son at the School of Art and Design. They were paid for the privilege. She needed the money, because her father believed that she and her sister 'should keep him & Mother & the Boys—& they Both reconed that married or Single we should work for them'. She did so until her doctor, F. C. Batchelor, ordered them out of her house (she was ill and he was visiting her). It is not known how she came to enjoy the services of two of Dunedin's most eminent doctors, but her parents' obedience is an eloquent reminder of how hierarchical social relationships survived in the colony (at least among immigrants).<sup>67</sup>



*They may have been poor but they knew how to present themselves and express their self-respect. Mary Lee stands at the back with, from left to right, her daughter Alice, John Rowe (Alice's son), Fred Lee (Mary's son), and Alexander Taylor (Mary's father). The photo probably dates from around 1910. Auckland Public Library.*

Mary Lee—she now invariably called herself Lee—had found in sewing and embroidery a fragile fulcrum against loss of self-respect, if not destitution and despair. She regularly needed help from the Charitable Aid Board, and got it. She did not resent her dependence on charitable aid—although she never mentioned it in her memoir—any more than she resented Mrs Reynolds. Mary Lee always belonged to a church but never to a union. The new-fangled ideology of socialism never appealed to her at all. She thought that talk of socialist equality cut at the very root of a decent and orderly society. Only a strong and Scottish sense of human equality mediated her belief in a hierarchical society, cemented by philanthropy and deference. Her sense of self-respect also established a standard of propriety. Once, when working for a doctor's wife who accused her of feigning deafness, Mrs Lee told her employer, 'What you need is a little manners'. 'Presently [the ubiquitous] Mrs Reynolds came to the Sewing Room with more work, & she said that i had acted quite right & That Mrs Orr had been very rude: But Mrs Orr Ogston Would never Speak to me again, & never gave me more work.'

[68](#)

Mrs Lee's remarkable memoir—like all such documents—reveals the importance of regular and reliable clients, conscientious industry and good work. She accepted without question the fact that she would earn less than a man. She also fulfilled her role within her parents' family economy; her obligation to support them, even after she had married and left home. They never seem to have considered that she should serve an apprenticeship although, thanks in part to her earnings, both of her brothers did so. She clearly resented this from time to time. No ideology transformed private feeling into a source of public action. But however hard her life, she strove for independence, a house of her own, 'nice things' and freedom from debt. When she recalled 'the most Poverty Stricken Xmass & new year i ever had', the nadir of poverty in her son's dramatic novel, *Children of the Poor*, she added, '... but we owed nothing anywhere.'<sup>69</sup> She had paid her dues. Perhaps because she had acquired sufficient skill to find employment without serving an apprenticeship, like her father, she did not push her children to seek apprenticeships. She wanted her children 'to have all the Benefits of School They could get', however. Both sons also struggled to achieve economic independence.<sup>70</sup>

Esther Brown was also born into a skilled family, her mother a seamstress and her father a printer by trade. Both parents, it seems, had served apprenticeships. Esther's mother had two sisters in New Zealand who wrote so favourably about the colony that the family decided to follow them. On arrival Esther's father could not find a job in his trade, so worked as a navvy on the Caversham cutting before buying a small farm near Portobello. Although Uncle Joe and Aunt Jane had developed a successful dairy at the Maori Kaik—'Uncle Joe's butter had a great reputation'—Esther's father failed as a farmer. His wife forced him to sell up by going to live with her sister in Dunedin and the family then settled in North East Valley, ran a small herd of cows, and father became a milkman. It is not clear whether he began drinking because this venture also failed, for he had no head for business (or certainly not a business for which he had not trained), but his gregarious and generous nature soon won him sufficient popularity in the pubs to compensate for his declining popularity at home. He drank most of his income. His wife could expect no money from him,

although she nagged and rowed, and came to depend on her skill as a seamstress and her faith. She was a zealous member of the Choral Hall Brethren in Moray Place.<sup>71</sup>

Mrs Brown wanted, above all, her own house. Her husband's inability to provide it—all his brothers-in-law had succeeded—contributed to the souring marriage. He next tried his hand as a hawker and was often away for long periods, but the bills mounted, he drank most of the income and finally sold his assets. Esther could remember the depth of his depression. He talked of suicide, but went to Australia instead. Although he found work there he never sent any money back. Mrs Brown, a trained milliner and seamstress, 'had regular customers'.<sup>72</sup> She also made clothes for her own children and began hawking clothes to 'busy mothers she knew in the city'.<sup>73</sup> It was the 'Long Depression' and food was very cheap. The absence of sugar measured the family's penury. Mrs Brown always paid cash for what she wanted or went without, unless she could make or grow it. With her husband in Australia, however, 'Mother's fortunes were at their lowest ebb'.<sup>74</sup> The oldest son went to work, his wages of 7/6d a week supplementing the family income, but she had five other children. Mrs Brown sewed from nine in the morning until six in the evening for 2/6d a day, every day but Sunday. Her older girls took turns to stay home and look after the little ones, do the housework and cook dinner. The Charitable Aid Board refused to help them on the grounds, or so Esther believed, that no man 'would leave his family unprovided for like that'.<sup>75</sup>

Esther was only eleven years old when she had to stay home and run the house. Once she had mastered the necessary domestic skills she went to work for Christine and Nina McTavish, who ran tearooms. She worked eleven-hour days, seven days a week, for 2/6d a week, and learned to shop, cook and bake for a business. Other jobs followed, but now, when housekeeping at home, 'I learned to sew buttons on strongly and work neat buttonholes and do hand feather-stitching ...'.<sup>76</sup> Her mother was training her in preparation for apprenticeship. At age fourteen she was apprenticed to a dressmaker, earning nothing for the first year but with the prospect of earning five shillings a week in the second year or being laid off. Her older sister had been twice laid off before getting piece work in a stocking factory.<sup>77</sup> Mrs Brown's determination to ensure that all her children served

apprenticeships reveals her recognition of the importance of skill in achieving self-respect, security and independence. Perhaps her own experience had underlined the need for women to have a trade, even if married. She apprenticed her other two daughters to Sargood & Ewen, bootmakers, possibly reflecting her own frustration at being unable to mend or make footwear. All the girls could have earned much more as servants, at least while young, 'but mother ... did not want us to go through the humiliations and drudgery of that life'.<sup>78</sup>

Mrs Brown also controlled the courtships of her daughters with a tender but practical eye. She had one test of a man: would he be a good provider? That test involved careful moral scrutiny of any young man. Potential suitors had to be serving apprenticeships, preferably for seven years. Strict rules governed courting. Mother, meanwhile, had finally achieved economic independence through skill, thrift and very hard work. She had bought a house large enough to take in boarders (young apprentices!), ran chickens and a vegetable garden, and had even found time and energy to cultivate a small flower garden in front of the verandah. All of her children had now left school and the eldest paid board and kept themselves in clothes. For the first time money was abundant. Mrs Brown began buying other properties, including a boarding house for women booked into St Helen's Maternity Hospital.<sup>79</sup> Even Mr Brown, who returned penniless from Australia, had longer and longer sober periods, found a variety of semi-skilled jobs and began going to church with his wife and children.<sup>80</sup> In the buoyant economy of the 1900s the daughters all rented shops and plied their various trades, although the shoemakers ran bakeries. The two boys served apprenticeships as tinsmiths for Farra Brothers.<sup>81</sup>

In the end the Brown girls all married 'what [mother] ... used to designate as "good providers"'.<sup>82</sup> They all had their 'hope chests', made their own wedding dresses and 'going away' outfits, and mother cooked and baked the refreshments. The weddings of the oldest girls took place at home, the main extravagances being a bridal photograph at Patillo's and a horse and carriage for the newly-weds. Esther had not intended to marry her betrothed until they had saved enough to be economically independent, and had no 'hope chest', 'but Jack and his elder brother had served their seven-years apprenticeship as painters and had started in business for

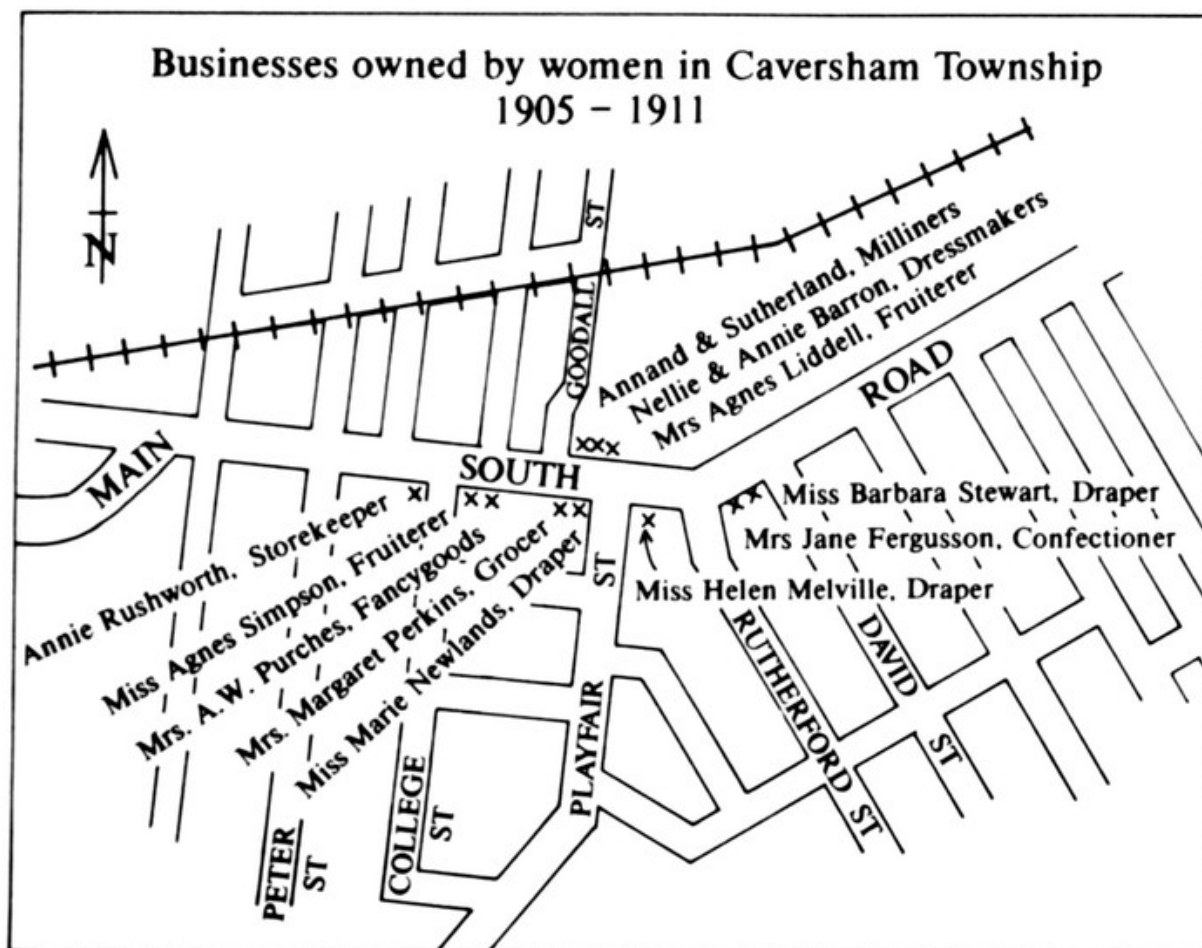
themselves’.<sup>83</sup> And so Esther and Jack married. They built a shop for her to run, and Jack soon employed two journeymen and an apprentice. When older, Esther realised the extraordinary nature of her mother’s achievement and asked: ‘How did she keep going so steadily?’ Her mother told her that the Bible, ‘which she memorised in school at an early age’, had guided and comforted her, and provided her with a belief in work, honesty, ‘moderation in all things’, and the absolute danger of going into debt.<sup>84</sup> Because of mother’s strict adherence to these values the family had survived and prospered. Her children did so more easily.

The stories of Mrs Lee and Mrs Brown reveal much about the moral imperatives which shaped the world of the skilled. Mrs Lee always regretted the inadequacy of her training and her inability to offer her children the supervision and guidance that they needed. Both women are unusual, however, for they had to fend for themselves and their children because they had married drunkards. Such errors of judgement exacted a high price. Such experience also reinforced the belief in the value of self discipline and the fear of debt. Skill did not provide protection against life’s hazards, but it helped, so long as a man (or woman) knew the limits of their ability and did not overreach themselves. The formation of a character capable of acquiring and practising a skill began with birth. Parental training, advice and economic support were essential, even in Mary Lee’s case. Most women made better choices and had to struggle less. Mabel Hill, the daughter of a hatter and a brass founder’s daughter, married the printer, John McIndoe, and ran husband and family. She too has been described as ‘self sufficient’ and ‘indomitable’, but she never had to practise her skill of painting.<sup>85</sup> It remained her accomplishment.

## IV

White-collar jobs and factory jobs did not offer the young women who poured into them much prospect of becoming self-employed. Nor did they generally hold out many prospects if they never married. Sewing, dressmaking and millinery—not to mention various other branches of needlework and clothes making—provided women with some of the opportunities that skilled men enjoyed. The women invariably earned less

when they sold their labour, but this disadvantage ended if they practised their craft on their own account. To do that required mastering a skill, usually achieved by completing an apprenticeship and working as a journeywoman (and it helped to understand bookkeeping). Factory workers, by contrast, never achieved such skill. Prudent mothers (and fathers), aware that their daughters might never marry or that their husbands might, for various reasons, prove to be poor providers, often scrimped to ensure that daughters had a marketable skill. Even women who married good providers could use such skills to save money and earn extra if the family was financially hard-pressed. Sizeable numbers set up on their own account, often working from home, and a few ran businesses and employed other women.<sup>86</sup>



Although the *Directory* ignored those without a business address, in 1901 some eighty dressmakers and milliners ran businesses in Dunedin,

fifty-five of them unmarried. A few partnerships existed and, as with the men, these usually involved relations. Only six milliners and dressmakers had businesses in Caversham, three of which were owned by the daughters of well-to-do men (the Misses Rutherford, Miss Anscombe, and the Misses Barron). Other entrepreneurial niches existed for skilled women. In 1901, within Dunedin, there were thirteen women drapers, eight of whom were married and two of whom had shops on the Main South Road. In that year, eighteen women confectioners also ran businesses, including Mrs E. MacKay in David Street. Thirteen of these women were married. By 1911 there were 121 dressmakers and milliners, thirty-three drapers, and twenty-four confectioners, a large percentage growth although the numbers remained small. The next decade, despite the war, saw a decline in all but the number of confectioners in Dunedin.<sup>87</sup> In Caversham little changed. In 1921 four dressmakers, a draper and two confectioners still ran shops while a draper and a confectioner had opened shops in St Clair. Within Dunedin nine women also taught music, none of them in Caversham, although Ruby Lyons was taught by a neighbour who taught for love, not money, and a Miss Emily Whitaker briefly taught music in Caversham township before the war.<sup>88</sup>

By 1900 small-scale dressmaking and millinery coexisted with large-scale factory production. Until the 'sweating' crisis of 1888–90 many of the larger firms subcontracted out various jobs, but the outcry and the formation of the Dunedin Tailoresses' Union ended the practice. No source allows us to estimate the proportion of women who worked in the large clothing factories as against the number in the bespoke sector. Overall, however, in 1901 the clothing industry employed 27 per cent of the city's workforce, 80 per cent of whom were women. The New Zealand Clothing Factory employed about 300 women, and Ross and Glendinning's various factories employed several hundred women in their workforce of about 1,000.<sup>89</sup> In 1901, nationally, 9,365 were younger than twenty-five while only 4,546 were older than that. The proportion of older women grew over the next twenty years. By 1921, 6,898 were under twenty-five while 5,861 were older than that. The proportions for Dunedin are not known. Given the local industry's size, however, the proportions would have been about the same.<sup>90</sup>

Our inability to distinguish the proportions working in the factory and

bespoke sectors means that we cannot give a figure for the relative proportions of unskilled and skilled. Those entering the bespoke sector served a four-year apprenticeship (they were not paid for their first year, and might be laid off after that year or when they completed their apprenticeship). Once the apprenticeship had been served, however, the women had acquired all the skills necessary to make an entire dress, coat, hat, etc. Working conditions in the bespoke sector were not appealing, although they might vary with the firm's size. In small bespoke firms the premises were usually unheated, draughty, poorly lit, poorly ventilated and lacked adequate facilities such as toilets. Employers, although usually trained in some branch of the craft, often 'drove' and 'sweated' their workers. The larger workshops, such as Todd and Brown, and retail stores in the city, such as the DIC and Brown Ewing, also employed large numbers of seamstresses. They frequently enjoyed better conditions. Like men workers, however, the women rarely complained about conditions, but vigilantly guarded their handicraft status: four-year apprenticeships, no more than one apprentice to three tailoresses (tailors enjoyed a one to four ratio), no more than one year as an improver on completing an apprenticeship and no more than one machinist to thirteen hand workers. Their awards also outlawed subcontracting. All work had to be done in the employer's workshop.<sup>91</sup>

The bespoke and factory sectors produced clothes for different markets and organised the work in different ways. In factories the work was organised by garment and the relevant tasks. Minute subdivisions of the work done on each garment, each done by machine, allowed manufacturers to replace skilled with unskilled labour. Despite widespread de-skilling of women's work the language of craft continued to be used. For instance, a young woman might be apprenticed to the coat-making department. She would never learn to make a coat, but would become a baster, machinist, or finisher. Men monopolised cutting, pressing and overseeing and succeeded in obtaining higher wages for work that was increasingly classified as skilled. After a two-year apprenticeship the young factory woman was classified as an improver and after another year she was a journeywoman. The sewing machine provides the key to the intricate subdivision of processes. Although invented in 1850, only in the late nineteenth century

did steam-driven machines replace the treadle and make mass production possible. Steam-and then electric-driven sewing machines enhanced economies of scale and created jobs for a growing army of machinists. In some lines of work, such as shirt-making, which had never been paid as skilled work, the process of subdivision and mechanisation proceeded rapidly. By 1920 some thirty-seven distinct machinists undertook the thirty-seven separate operations needed to make a shirt. Such an intricate division of labour lent itself to 'team work', as employers euphemistically called it, where workers paced each other in time to the machine's rhythm. The Arbitration Court outlawed the practice, not altogether successfully.<sup>92</sup>

In the bespoke sector only certain production processes could be done by machine, but the growth in volume created more demand for related handwork that could not be mechanised. Calculating the ratio of handworkers to machinists proved a complex and at times contentious task for all types of garments. Competition from mass-produced, cheap and high-quality clothing put mounting pressure on the men and women of the bespoke sector. Mechanisation had a differential impact, however. The male tailor had disappeared from the factory by 1900, except in a supervisory role. Even the pressers had begun to face de-skilling. Dressmaking and millinery, by comparison, proved more resistant to mechanisation throughout this period, handwork and treadle machines remaining the stock-in-trade equipment. By the 1930s machines could do embroidery, shirring, spokestitching, fagotting and rouleaux. The bespoke sector survived, but shrank, and by the 1950s it had almost disappeared from tailoring, dressmaking and millinery.<sup>93</sup>



*A small dressmaker's shop; the place and date are not known but around 1910 seems likely. The cutters and pressers sit against the wall and the fireplace where they heated their irons is just visible in the back left corner. The machinists are hard at work, using treadle machines, while the highly skilled seamstresses sit at their workbench. Hocken Library.*

A shop tailoress, by contrast, was apprenticed for four years. In this time she learned how to make a garment by hand. Cutting and pressing was men's work and the owner of the shop usually did the fitting. Whereas in the large factories there were about three or four hand-workers to each machinist, in the smaller shops the ratio was usually at least eight and sometimes as many as thirteen hand-workers to a machinist. Apprentices, improvers and artisans worked side by side, each apprentice being supervised by the master (or mistress) but usually under the supervision of a journeywoman or journeyman, generally a senior one. Not all girls were apprenticed to milliners or dressmakers, 'almost invariably women, for many served their time under the tailors, clothiers and outfitters. In 1910 the trades directory listed 153 such men, although by 1920 the number had dropped to 104. On completing an apprenticeship the young woman might well be laid off, for a shop did not necessarily need more fully trained workers, but it always needed a certain number of apprentices. The Tailoresses' Union—at least when Jane Runciman was secretary (1896–1920)—did not try to recruit shop tailoresses and ignored their needs, but the Arbitration Court invariably awarded them a higher minimum wage

than factory tailoresses, though they had a forty-eight-instead of a forty-five-hour week.<sup>94</sup> Thus tailoresses, even those in the largest factories, enjoyed legal protection in practising their skills, for the Court gave control over their work to women who had been trained as apprentices. Most dressmakers came out of the shops.

Shop tailoresses bore the brunt of the competition between the factory and bespoke sectors. Shop garments cost more than factory ones, and between 1910 and 1930 more and more people bought more and more factory garments. Over the same period, as sewing machines became cheaper and patterns more widely available, many women began making their own clothes. Tailors and dressmakers who had set up on their own account often found life harder by the year and visited their difficulties on their employees, pushing down wages, asking their workers to forego wages and trying to lower piece-work rates (which survived in the bespoke sector although the Court replaced them with a weekly wage for factory tailoresses in 1905). Miss Laura Bolton recalled that ‘we were always wondering if the boss was going to pay us or not. He’d give it to you if he had it’ (this boss was ‘too kind; he never got paid by a lot of people’). She stayed on because ‘I liked him too much ...’. Tom McLean, who entered his family’s business as an apprentice in 1907 and worked his way up, kept his shop but developed a small factory as well where about thirty workers produced garments by machine. Pre-industrial and industrial coexisted and when factory orders boomed the shop tailoresses came through to help. But in his factory, as in all others, the organisation of work reflected the structure of the pre-industrial craft.<sup>95</sup>

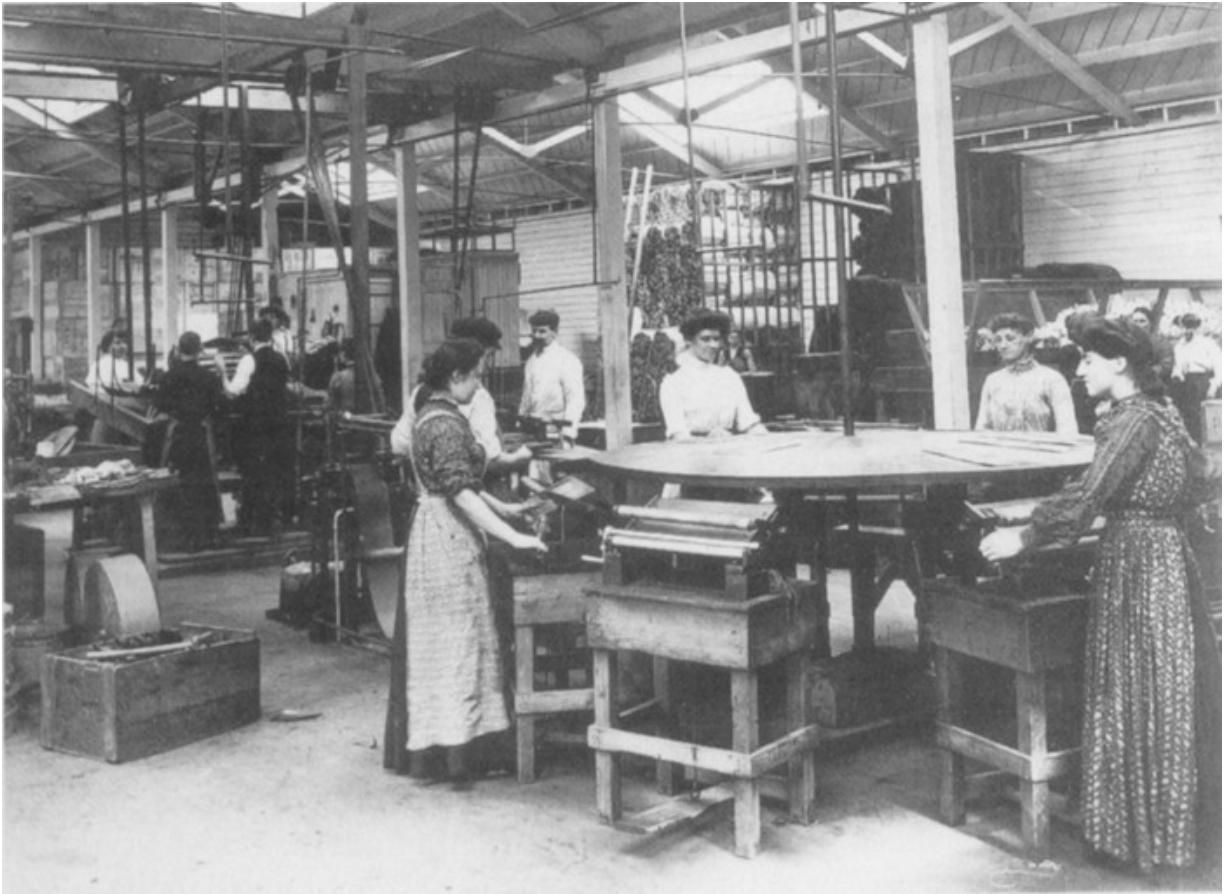
## V

The evidence available suggests that the daughters of skilled men (or skilled women) preferred to master a trade whereas the daughters of the unskilled tended to work in factories. In 1898, for instance, the New Zealand Wax Vesta Company employed thirty-two women in making and filling boxes. By 1908 the factory employed sixty-two women, thirty-nine of them under twenty years old. Because of their age these women cannot be found in electoral rolls and it is very difficult to identify the occupations of their

fathers. Oral sources indicate, however, that most of them had unskilled fathers and their behaviour attracted a certain amount of critical comment ('matchy tarts ... we called them in those days'). Jobs in the Wax Vesta factory offered a good pay packet for teenagers, but no skill. Yet the hours were reasonable, the conditions pleasant, and the women enjoyed the social life of the factory. Moreover they earned a good deal more than male apprentices of the same age and, up to the age of nineteen, more even than unskilled males of their own age. The married women who worked in the Wax Vesta factory, by contrast, received lower wages than the award rate for unskilled men (certainty is impossible because much of the work was on piece rates). When the match workers finally formed a union and went before the Arbitration Court in 1921, the Court simply assumed, as did both the union leaders and the employers, that if men earned enough to support a family then married women did not need a 'living wage'. Nobody complained, probably because the burden fell most heavily on the handful of women with dependent children or parents.<sup>[96](#)</sup>



*No photograph appears to exist of the inside of Rutherford's Wax Vesta factory. This is of Bell's Wax Vesta factory in Wellington, but this machine, patented in 1854, was used in both factories. About twenty lengths of cotton were passed through a waxing machine, then dried by passing through another machine. This was repeated until the wax coating was sufficiently thick. The tapers were then rounded, cut and set in dipping frames. The entire process was mechanised and one person could prepare and dip 50,000 matches a day. Wilkinson Sword Collection.*



*The boxes, however, had to be made and filled by hand, and women also did this work. Wilkinson Sword Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library*

The daughters of skilled families often sacrificed and scrimped in the quest for a trade skill. Despite having only a narrow range of occupational choices, lower wages and large barriers to promotion, they wanted the autonomy that a skill provided. Autonomy operated psychologically and economically, as it did with the men. For each young woman who undertook an apprenticeship, skill provided a potential source of self-respect and economic independence. It also structured their choice of marriage partners.<sup>97</sup> Skill did not necessarily bring economic rewards before marriage, however. Throughout the four or five years of apprenticeship these young women—like young male apprentices—had to be supported by their parents. Even when out of their time most of them paid board and some handed over most of their earnings to their parents. A similar pattern may also have existed in the new white-collar jobs which young women began entering in this period; regardless, women who served apprenticeships did not do so for any short-term economic gain. The drive

of women to acquire skill, despite being confined to restricted choices and condemned to a marginal status in the occupational structure, is eloquent evidence of the centrality of independence in the subculture of the skilled. The local Inspector of Factories, having remarked on the ‘rowdy behaviour’ of the women bootmakers, noted their individuality and self-reliance.<sup>98</sup> They, as much as the educated middle class, sacrificed present gratification for future gain.

The determination of Mrs Lee and Mrs Brown to have their own homes may also reflect a specifically female variant of the drive for independence. Both texts are dominated by networks of support and housing. As Cooper noted, many years later Mary Lee recalled all of her rented houses with considerable accuracy. The desire for a nice home dominated her life. In the end her sons had to achieve this dream for her, and did, and their wives looked after her. Mrs Brown’s drive to own her own home dominates her daughter’s narrative, and in the end she succeeded. It will never be known whether home ownership was a middle-class ideal which percolated down, a survival from the British peasantry cum yeomanry, or a variant of the skilled worker’s desire for independence and respectability. In all probability the three cultural imperatives converged. Even the *Maoriland Worker*, committed to creating a revolutionary socialist society, proclaimed that ‘Every woman ... dreams that some day she will have “a home of her own”’. Mabel Hill, to take another example, gave up the chance to study art in Paris in order to marry John McIndoe when she learnt that he was building a house for her.<sup>99</sup> Industrialisation, by making it harder for married women to balance their domestic responsibilities with wage earning, also increased the psychological importance of a house of one’s own. Here, whatever the census-takers said, women remained productive. In looking closely at women workers we can see, etched more clearly, the imperatives which shaped that subculture and the arbitrary way in which people defined and rewarded skill.

If the definition arbitrarily de-skilled women at home, not all definitions were equally arbitrary. In the clothing trades employers needed the skills of skilled women. Mechanisation constantly threatened to undermine those skills and had a major impact in the clothing industry, which lent itself to the methods of mass production. As in other trades, however, the simpler

and least skilled operations lent themselves most to mechanisation. To conclude by focusing on the clothing trades would be misleading. Only a small proportion of adult women stayed in the paid workforce and no woman could enter male-dominated skilled trades. Women who sold their labour and skill, in short, stood in an awkward and ambivalent relationship to the working class, however defined. They actively participated in the 'dominant male class structure', but in a subordinate and marginal role. Most women married and left the paid workforce. Married women constituted a 'unique caste within a male world'. If their husbands proved to be poor providers, as Mrs Lee and Mrs Brown remind us, they struggled on their own to achieve autonomy and independence. Many of them became formidable people. Yet as the working class came to be defined in male terms (a process we will explore in the last three chapters), the women of Caversham, whether working for wages or not, destabilised any meaning of skill or labour which assumed the exclusion of gender. As we shall see in Chapter 9, their presence also destabilised the discourse centred on the idea of social class, a discourse which was fashioned between 1908 and 1922. Whether they subscribed to or dissented from this new discourse, and no fuss was made at the time, women complicated it. This is a particular form of a general problem, for women continually 'confound the social-structural categories we bring to their analysis'.<sup>100</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 66. For a defense of the traditional view see John H. Goldthorpe, 'Women and Class Analysis: in Defence of the Conventional View', *Sociology*, v. 17 (Nov. 1983), pp. 465–88.

<sup>2</sup> Some argue that women preferred this; others see such exclusion as a consequence of patriarchy.

<sup>3</sup> Olssen, *Red Feds*, pp. 98–100.

<sup>4</sup> Rosemary Goodyear, 'Blackboots and Pinafores: Childhood in Otago, 1900–1920', MA thesis, OU, 1992, ch. 6 and Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*, London, 1992, pp. 122–3.

<sup>5</sup> Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, New York,

1978, pp. 53–55.

[6](#) Catherine Hakim, 'Census Reports as Documentary Evidence: The Census Commentaries, 1801–1951', *Sociological Review*, v. 28 (Aug. 1980), p. 562; Desley Deacon, 'Political Arithmetic: The Nineteenth Century Australian Census and the Construction of the Dependent Woman', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, v. 11 (Autumn 1985), pp. 27–47; Marilyn Waring, *If Women Counted: What Men Value and What Women are Worth*, Wellington, 1988; and Nancy Folbre, 'The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth Century Economic Thought', *Signs*, v. 16 (Spring 1991), pp. 463–84.

[7](#) See Julie Hynes, 'The Solo Women of Caversham: Unloved, Unknown and Unequal', 452 class essay, OU, 1980. For a general discussion of the situation in New Zealand see Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family: 1880–1926', in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, Auckland, 1980, pp. 159–83 and Margaret Tennant, 'Natural Directions: the New Zealand Movement for Sexual Differentiation in Education During the Early Twentieth Century', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, v. 12 (Oct. 1977), pp. 142–53.

[8](#) Karen Duder, 'Domestic Servants, Marriage and Mobility in Dunedin 1880–1890', research thesis, OU, 1989, pp. 4–5. This appears to have been part of a national trend, for Paul Husbands discovered the same pattern in Auckland; see 'The People of Freemans Bay', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1992, pp. 144, 147.

[9](#) Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', pp. 161–7.

[10](#) Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, p. 49 and Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*, ch. 6.

[11](#) Sonya Rose, 'Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict: Exclusionary Strategies of Male Trade Unionists in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social History*, v. 13 (May 1988), p. 196.

[12](#) Rose, 'Gender at Work: Sex, Class and Industrial Capitalism', *History Workshop Journal*, v. 21 (Spring 1986), pp. 113–31.

[13](#) Lee, "“Playing the Wag”"; Karen Duder, 'Hegemony or Resistance: The Women of the Skilled Working Class and the Ideology of Domesticity and Respectability', MA thesis, OU, 1992, pp. 142–3.

[14](#) In the colony, unlike the 'Home Country', women rarely worked in the fields and were never hired in industries such as coal mining. The

gendered division of labour and the ideology of separate spheres undoubtedly won general acceptance in a society where men's work was often physically demanding.

[15](#) Ronda Cooper, 'John Barr', *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. I, 1769–1869, Wellington, 1990, pp. 16–17. Bracken was something of a folk hero on The Flat; see above pp. 165, 206.

[16](#) Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, pp. 14–15.

[17](#) Peter Steams, *Lives of Labour: Work in a Maturing Industrial Society*, London, 1975, p. 273.

[18](#) Cited by Duder, 'Hegemony or Resistance', p. 95.

[19](#) *Census*, 1916, Part 2, p. 1 and Karen Duder, 'Hegemony or Resistance', pp. 94–96, 106–10.

[20](#) Elizabeth Pleck, 'Two Worlds in One: Work and Family', *Journal of Social History*, v. 10 (Winter 1976), pp. 178–95, persuasively argued that the separation of home and work, once seen as the major change involved in the shift from 'pre-modern' to 'modern' families, and a consequence of industrialisation, was not true of rural or working-class families in Britain.

[21](#) David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development from 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 249–323.

[22](#) W. B. Sutch, *The Quest for Security in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1966, p. 66.

[23](#) *AJHR*, 1890, H–5.

[24](#) Margaret Galt, 'Wealth and Income in New Zealand, 1870 to 1939', Ph.D. thesis, VUW, 1985, pp. 216–19 and Lucy Duncan, "'What Katy did in School': A Study of Curriculum Development in Dunedin Girls' Secondary Schools, 1900–1920", research thesis, OU, 1982.

[25](#) Galt, p. 214. The relativity did not close for all women; see John E. Bartlett, 'Woven Together: The Industrial Workplace in the Otago Woollen Mills, 1871–1930', research thesis, OU, 1987, pp. 131–2.

[26](#) See *AJHR*, 1907, H–11, p. xx; 1908, H–11, p. xxiv; 1909, p. xxxiii; and 1910, H–11, p. vii.

[27](#) Rose, 'Gender at Work', pp. 122–8.

[28](#) See n. 26 above.

[29](#) Diana Unwin, 'Women in New Zealand Industry with Special Reference to Factory Industry and to Conditions in Dunedin', MA thesis,

OU, 1944, pp. 13–15, 49–50.

[30](#) *Awards*, v. 5, 1904, p. 20. I am indebted to Stephen Robertson for a 452 class essay on this topic, subsequently revised and published as ‘Women Workers and the New Zealand Arbitration Court, 1894–1920’, in Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates (eds), *Women, Work and the Labour Movement in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Sydney, 1991, pp. 30–41.

[31](#) I have explored the exclusion of racial minorities in ‘The New Zealand Labour Movement and Race’, forthcoming in a series of conference papers from the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

[32](#) Rose, ‘Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict’, p. 207.

[33](#) Olssen, ‘Women, Work and Family’, pp. 162–7.

[34](#) ‘Reminiscences’, pp. 30–31.

[35](#) Olssen, ‘Women, Work and Family’, Table 8.3, pp. 163–4.

[36](#) *AJHR*, 1905, H–11, p. 98.

[37](#) *AJHR*, 1911, H–11, p. xxxii and 1912, H–11, pp. xxx and lxxiv.

[38](#) E.g. *AJHR*, 1918, H–11, p. 1 and above, pp. 144–7.

[39](#) *Awards*, v. 17 (1916) p. 873.

[40](#) ‘Report ...’, *AJHR*, 1917, H–43, pp. 13–14, 33–34.

[41](#) Wellington District Grocers’ Assistants’ and Drivers’ Award, *Awards*, v. 19 (1918) p. 936.

[42](#) *Ibid.*, v. 20 (1919), p. 1348.

[43](#) Robertson, ‘Women Workers’, pp. 14–15. I have placed inverted commas around traditionally to signal that people often used the word to refer to the practices of their parents’ generation.

[44](#) *Awards*, v. 19 (1918), p. 889.

[45](#) J. T. Paul, *Dunedin Operative Bootmakers’ Union: Fifty Years of Effort, 1876–1926*, Dunedin, 1926, p. 15.

[46](#) *Awards*, v. 19 (1918), p. 648.

[47](#) The clothing industry is the best documented, largely because women were numerically dominant; see J. T. Paul, *Our Majority and the Afteryears, 1889–1939: The Dunedin Tailoresses’ Union*, Dunedin, 1939 (a revised and enlarged version of the 1910 edition); R. T. Robertson, ‘“Sweating” in Dunedin 1888–1890’, research thesis, OU, 1974; and Penelope Harper, ‘The Dunedin Tailoresses’ Union 1889–1914’, research thesis, OU, 1988.

[48](#) Rose, 'Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict', *Social History*, v. 13 (May 1988). She has more fully analysed the role of gender in *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England*, London, 1992.

[49](#) For New Zealand see Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', pp. 173–81 and Shelley Griffiths, 'Feminism and the Ideology of Motherhood in New Zealand, 1896–1930', MA thesis, OU, 1984.

[50](#) In the nineteenth century the idea of the gentleman was also democratised and in the colony all men assumed the status of gentlemen and insisted on the use of Mister. In the same way, married women all assumed the status of Ma'am. See David Castronovo, *The English Gentleman: Images and Ideals in Literature and Society*, New York, 1987 and W. P. Morrell and D. W. Hall, *A History of New Zealand Life*, Christchurch, 1962, ch. 3.

[51](#) Heidi Hartmann, 'Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex', *Signs*, v. 1 (Spring 1976), pp. 137–69 and 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union', in L. Sargent (ed.), *Women and Revolution*, Boston, 1981, pp. 20–22. See also Wally Secombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social History*, v. 2 (Jan. 1986), pp. 53–76.

[52](#) John Rickard, *H. B. Higgins: The Rebel as Judge*, Sydney, 1984, pp. 171–4.

[53](#) Cited by Noel Woods, *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1963, p. 96. See also Holt, *Arbitration*, p. 105.

[54](#) James E. Le Rossignol and W. D. Stewart, *State Socialism in New Zealand*, New York, 1910, p. 239.

[55](#) Cited by Holt, *Arbitration*, p. 105.

[56](#) In Australia, interestingly, the one union known to have sought and secured equal pay during this period changed its mind before long, because men's wages began to fall to the woman's rate. The women, most of whom were married, preferred their husbands to earn a family wage. See Melanie Nolan, 'Sex or Class? The Politics of the First Equal Pay Campaign in Victoria', in Frances and Scates (eds), *Women, Work and the Labour Movement*, pp. 101–22.

[57](#) Olssen, 'Women and Work', pp. 175–8.

[58](#) Lee, *The Not So Poor*, p. 49.

[59](#) *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[60](#) *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[61](#) *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[62](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

[63](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 63–65; Rachel Reynolds, *Pioneering in Australia and New Zealand: Incidents in the Life of the Late Mrs. W. H. Reynolds ...*, Dunedin, 1929; and Dorothy Page, ‘Rachel Reynolds’, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v II, 1870–1900, Wellington, 1992, pp. 419–20.

[64](#) Lee, *The Not So Poor*, p. 69.

[65](#) Cooper, ‘Introduction’ pp. 25–26, points out that the couple filled out the ‘Intention to Marry’ form but do not seem to have legally wed, although, both in Scotland and among gypsies, marriages were still often made by mutual consent.

[66](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 138, 140.

[67](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84 and for the painting sessions, p. 88. See too Olssen, *John A. Lee*, Dunedin, 1977, p. 2, where I wrongly assumed that Batchelor must have been the landlord.

[68](#) *Not So Poor*, p. 100.

[69](#) *Ibid.*, p. 118 and [John A. Lee], *Children of the Poor*, New York, 1934.

[70](#) *Not So Poor*, p. 119. John A. Lee, with the help of a Rehabilitation loan, set up as a soap manufacturer before entering Parliament and later became a bookseller and publisher. His brother, Fred, became a storekeeper.

[71](#) Esther Brown, *Scottish Mother*, New York, 1957, pp. 49–60.

[72](#) *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[73](#) *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[74](#) *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[75](#) *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[76](#) *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[77](#) *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[78](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

[79](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 103–14.

[80](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 116–17.

[81](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 130.

[82](#) *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[83](#) *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[84](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 145–6.

[85](#) Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, pp. 16–19.

[86](#) Carol Brown, ‘The Clothing Trades’, 452 class essay, OU, 1985.

[87](#) The figures were eighty milliners and dressmakers, twenty-two drapers, and thirty-one confectioners.

[88](#) ‘Reminiscences’, p. 40.

[89](#) Clark, ‘Dunedin in 1901’, p. 46.

[90](#) Olssen, ‘Women and Work’, Table 8.4, p. 166. In 1905 only eighteen clothing factories in the country employed more than thirty people. Dunedin boasted five of them, and two had more than 500 employees.

[91](#) *Awards*, v. 6 (1905), pp. 260–74; v. 10 (1909), pp. 645–7 and pp. 665–8 for tailors; and v. 14 (1913), pp. 967–9.

[92](#) This is similar to the Australian pattern; see Raelene Francis, “‘No More Amazons’: Gender and Work Process in the Victorian Clothing Trades, 1890–1939”, *Labour History*, v. 50 (1986), pp. 95–131 and especially 101–2. For ‘team work’ see *Awards*, v. 10 (1909), p. 647 and the transcript of Carol Brown’s interview with Miss Laura Bolton (1985), p. 8.

[93](#) Francis, “‘No More Amazons’”.

[94](#) In the 1920s, after the Tailoresses’ Union had been absorbed into a Clothing Workers’ Union, the union tried to recruit shop tailoresses and regularly inspected all workshops; transcript of interview with Miss Bolton, p. 9.

[95](#) *Awards*, v. 6 (1905), pp. 410–15 and interview with Miss Bolton, pp. 4, 10–11.

[96](#) Bamford, ‘The Wax Vesta Match Factory’, pp. 5, 13 and Table 3 on p. [20] and transcript of interview with Robert Murray p. 7. See also *Awards*, v. 21 part 2 (1920), p. 1994ff. and v. 22, part 2 (1921), pp. 1189–90.

[97](#) Duder, ‘Domestic Servants’, pp. 39–40, demonstrated that domestic servants usually married unskilled men. In Caversham, by contrast, the pattern was more blurred.

[98](#) *AJHR*, 1896, H–6, p. 10, cited Unwin, p. 75.

[99](#) *Maoriland Worker*, 20 Dec. 1922, p. 12 (I am indebted to Dr Barbara Brookes for this reference from her forthcoming book, ‘Natural Desires: A History of Women in New Zealand’). For Hill and McIndoe, see Mosley, *Faces in the Fire*, p. 17.

[100](#) All the quotations in this paragraph are from Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*, New York, 1985, p. 42.

## CHAPTER 5

### *The Carpenters*

The men in the building trades distinguished between carpenters and joiners although many had trained in both crafts. Both groups built the permanent structure of a building (which distinguished their work from that done by the men in the furniture trades). In Britain carpenters fixed wood to brick or stone buildings (such as floors, roof trusses, skirting, architraves, window frames etc.). Their work required mastery of the relevant techniques and materials, some structural knowledge and the ability to work independently. On The Flat, as in much of the colony and in sharp contrast to Britain, most houses were made entirely of wood. The joiner, by comparison with the carpenter, worked mainly in workshops and made such things as stairs, doors and windows. By and large the joiner did finer and more detailed work, but both groups had to be able to read plans, lay out work and judge which tools and timbers were appropriate. Although many aspects of joinery lent themselves increasingly to mechanisation, the more complicated work had not been mechanised and machines, such as planers and lathes, required a high level of skill to set and operate. By 1900 mechanisation had occurred to a considerable extent in Britain, and the joinery factory had replaced the workshop, but it had made little progress in Dunedin. Nor was the building industry dominated by large contractors as it was in Britain. In 1900 Dunedin's leading builder employed only twelve men and the largest joinery and furniture factory employed twenty-two men.<sup>[1](#)</sup>



*A rare photograph of a building under construction. It shows carpenters building a factory, on an unknown site, c. 1910. Alexander Turnbull Library.*



*Carpenters building a house on an unknown site, 1912. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

## I

In 1902 33.9 per cent (137 men) of the skilled workers living in Caversham were employed in the building trades. The proportion fell to 29.3 per cent

(147 men) in 1911 and had increased to 32 per cent (164 men) by 1922. As Table 5.1 makes clear, carpenters dominated, constituting about half of all men in the building trades throughout the period (the number of masters in each trade is given second, to give an idea of the relevant ratios). Locals often referred to Caversham as ‘the Carpenters’ Borough’.<sup>2</sup> From a sample of 240 carpenters who lived in Caversham between 1900 and 1922, 140 (58.3 per cent) belonged to the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (ASC&J), the railways employed eight (3.3 per cent) who worked at Hillside, another eight were idiosyncratic employers who preferred to list themselves in the electoral roll as carpenters rather than builders, while eighty-four (35 per cent) did not belong to the union.<sup>3</sup> In a handful of cases these non-unionists may have worked for the railways and belonged to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, but in linking the two sets of records certainty is impossible. It is also possible that a small number of the eighty-four non-union members worked for some other public authority and belonged to a public-sector union, but most did not.

TABLE 5.1  
**Journeyman and Masters in the Building Trades, 1902–22**

	1902		1905		1911		1914		1922	
	J	M	J	M	J	M	J	M	J	M
carpenter	71	2	68	6	74	14	67	19	82	8
joiner	5	-	3	-	7	-	10	-	5	-
cabinet-maker	5	1	5	3	3	2	1	2	8	-
painter	15	2	29	3	25	8	25	11	26	11
plasterer	6	-	6	-	2	-	8	-	12	-
others	35	-	35	-	36	-	30	-	31	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>19</b>

Of the sample of 240 carpenters who lived in Caversham at some point during the period, 159 disappeared from the records when they left Caversham. Thirty-one of them (18.9 per cent) died, of whom only nine left wills, while one died intestate, the Public Trust taking over his estate. Eighty-seven of the remaining 128 carpenters who disappeared from the records for Caversham had only moved. Five left and returned, which means that they were elsewhere for five years, fifty-three shifted to another

area of Dunedin and twenty-nine moved to another town. Forty-one (25.8 per cent) left no trace. Some of these may have moved out of Otago and Southland, although they could not be traced in Wise's *Post Office Directory*, but it seems more likely that they had left the country. Eighty-one of the carpenters—33 per cent—neither died nor left Caversham after they settled (approximately the same proportion as for skilled workers generally). Of these, however, we must subtract thirty-six carpenters first reported to be living in Caversham in 1922, the last year of our analysis. In the end, only eleven lived in Caversham for the entire period and another eight were there from 1906 onwards.<sup>4</sup>

Movement within Dunedin does not seem to have been related to upward social mobility, for of these fifty-three men who moved within the city only four changed occupations, one of whom became a schoolteacher, and two subsequently listed themselves as farmers (just under 9 per cent). Of the twenty-nine men who left Dunedin and can be traced, however, four next listed themselves as builders, two became orchardists and one a farmer (a rate of almost 25 per cent). The farmer and one builder either did not like or failed in their new occupations. Although the union's membership books constitute a different data base, it is interesting to note that of the 128 who served abroad in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and survived, forty-six proved to be untraceable after the war, nine settled in another town, most of whom became builders, and sixty-eight came back to Dunedin. One of the sixty-eight became a cabinet-maker, four changed occupations and the rest resumed their trade.<sup>5</sup>

Biography illustrates these general themes. The Anscombes were not unusual. Edward Anscombe and his family migrated from Lindfield, Sussex, in the late 1870s. His son, Edmund, who had been born in 1874, attended Caversham School. *Stone's Directory* for 1886 reports them living on Lindsay Road in Rockyside. In 1888, having left school, Edmund crossed the Tasman on the SS *Te Anau* to see the Melbourne Exhibition, thus beginning an infatuation with exhibitions which culminated many years later in his spectacular designs for the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition of 1924–25 and the New Zealand centennial in 1940. On his return from Melbourne he moved to Waiwera South, about six miles from Clinton, and did his apprenticeship as a carpenter. It is interesting to note

that *Stone's Directory* listed an Edward Anscombe as a building contractor in Waiwera South, Southland. It is possible that Edmund served his apprenticeship under the supervision of a cousin or uncle (or even his father, although *Stone's Directory* still listed an Edward at the family home in Lindsay Road). This may have been the reason for moving because trades often ran in families and the older generation trained the younger. After completing his apprenticeship Edmund returned to his parents' home on Forbury Road, *Stone's Directory* for 1898 describing him and his father as carpenters. In 1901 Edmund left for the United States to study architecture. In 1907 he returned and began his practice as an architect, quickly making his mark. One brother, who had also entered the trade, had formed a partnership and advertised as a builder and joiner. The Anscombes illustrate nicely the variety of human purposes which could shape transience.<sup>6</sup>

The building trades boomed once the 'Long Depression' ended.<sup>7</sup> The gold-dredging boom kept the building and engineering trades 'exceptionally busy' constructing dredge pontoons. In March 1900 there were 266 dredging companies with an approximate capital value of £2.5 million. The demand for houses and furniture survived the collapse of the dredging boom. The engineering industry was harder hit. The building trades remained prosperous, employment brisk and overtime common. According to the local inspector of factories 'an increased demand for a better class of workers' homes and middle-class houses', reasonable interest rates and the extension of the electric tramway system contributed to the buoyancy.<sup>8</sup> The business cycle dipped in 1908 and 'the building trades ... not only found many of their members out of work for the first time for years, but employment continued difficult to find, and hard to keep, if found at all'. Dunedin was badly hit (according to the local inspector) and by August 1909 the Otago Branch of the ASC&J reported that thirty carpenters had signed the unemployment book.<sup>9</sup>

After a hard winter the situation improved, but only in the last half of 1910 did trade pick up. 'The new high school for girls, one large warehouse, and several fine factory buildings have been the main contracts.'<sup>10</sup> In 1911 'a shortage of hands' existed throughout New Zealand and the Department of Labour bemoaned the fact that the young preferred

office 'to manual work'. 'There are comparatively few apprentices offering....' The local inspector reported 'some slackness during the winter months, but the major portion of the year has been satisfactory ...'.<sup>11</sup> The next two years were quite buoyant in Dunedin but the outbreak of war saw 'a rapid, if not sudden, slackness in nearly all industries'. Many 'artisans and general labourers' could not find work. It took a few months to recover, but after that, except in the winters of 1916 and 1917, the building trades boomed until the post-war depression of 1921–22. Dunedin's building trades recovered quickly. In 1923 the union's secretary reported that most carpenters were earning above award wages. The Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition created conditions akin to a bull market for the men of the building trades.<sup>12</sup>

Prosperity spawned opportunity. Fifteen Caversham carpenters became builders by 1922 (four later described themselves as farmers), and in 1923, thirty men resigned from the union to enter business on their own account. This represents an upward mobility rate of 22.4 per cent.<sup>13</sup> Of course not all skilled workers wanted or expected to be self-employed. The desire to own one's own business may have been less common among men who worked on large building sites, which often involved camaraderie on the job and union membership. Besides, self-improvement and upward mobility took various forms. Most of the carpenters employed by the railways as permanent staff, for instance, probably prized job security and superannuation more highly than the prospect of being self-employed.<sup>14</sup> Many journeymen, especially when young and single, prized the freedom to change jobs, move around the country, or even travel abroad more highly than job security or self-employment. For those who had married and settled down a better house or a better area might define their major aspiration. Most of Caversham's carpenters who shifted house within the city moved to 'better' suburbs such as St Kilda, Musselburgh, or Mornington. New suburbs also provided a lot of work on house construction.<sup>15</sup>

The ratio of employers to employees further illustrates the point. In 1900, for instance, the union had 167 members and cited ninety-six builders when it went before the Arbitration Court for an award. In 1903 the secretary cited 312 employers.<sup>16</sup> Indeed in that year there were more

employers than union members in the province (although eight employers belonged to the union). The sharp recession of 1909 and then the war briefly reduced the number of employers, but over the entire period the number never fell below 259 (in the same year the union boasted 522 members, twelve of whom were employers, but in the early 1920s the number of builders again exceeded the union's membership). The decentralised nature of the industry is indicated by the fact that for every builder there were never more than two members of the ASC&J, and slightly more than three carpenters. Most of the builders worked on their own account with one or two hired carpenters, perhaps a partner and an apprentice. Masters had almost invariably served apprenticeships and worked as journeymen. The largest employer in the building trades, George Clark, who lived in Kensington for a time but had his business address just north of the Oval, employed twelve men. Until the formation of Love Construction Company in 1911—when J. Y. Love resigned from the ASC&J 'owing to starting as an Employer'—no firm was large enough to tender for major public contracts.<sup>17</sup>



*Love Brothers Ltd, Port Chalmers. J. Y. Love and his brothers had all served apprenticeships in carpentry and joinery. Courtesy Naylor Love, copied by Reg Graham*

## II

The biographies of two men—C. J. Thorn and James Fletcher—and a collective portrait of deceased carpenters provide useful insights into the nature of the industry and allow analysis of the distinctive subculture of the building trades. They also permit us to investigate the upwardly mobile.

Charles J. Thorn, together with his wife and two children, arrived in Dunedin in 1875 and promptly settled in Caversham. Two of his brothers and their families had preceded them. Born in 1847, Charles had served his

apprenticeship as a carpenter—his father was a bricklayer—in a small Essex town. In 1866 he married the daughter of a London clerk and they lived in Lewisham, in southeast London, and then Forest Hill. He had also been brought up a devout Primitive Methodist, and the traditions of his faith no less than those of his craft persuaded him early to join the ‘new model’ Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, a prudent benefit society without much bargaining power. In the 1860s, however, the men of London’s building trades had established rules against overtime, ratios for the number of apprentices to journeymen, a standard rate for the job and special pay rates for the time needed to walk to out-of-town jobs. Employers held the ASC&J and other unions in the industry responsible for driving up costs, but the unions were too weak to have achieved such gains. Work-site groups achieved these new conditions by bargaining on the job; unions played little part in the process. Until much later in the century, as the ASC&J grew in power, non-union and union labour co-operated amicably on the job (as they seem to have done in Dunedin as late as the 1920s).<sup>18</sup>

Thorn typified the migrants of the 1870s, recruited from a society where skilled men had made dramatic gains through on-the-job co-operation. In the colony these men enjoyed an even more favourable bargaining position. He wrote home within weeks of arriving that ‘men that have been out here but a few years are owners of a piece of ground and house upon it, ... thus making themselves independent of a Saturday night [the weekly pay]. One of my mates saved £4 per week ....’ The ease with which men could earn high wages and buy land impressed him greatly.<sup>19</sup> According to the ASC&J’s ‘Members’ Book’, he joined up in 1876.

The men of the building trades—carpenters, joiners, stonemasons, bricklayers, plasterers and painters—established ‘customary’ work practices here that had been won in Britain when workers were at the height of their power. Nor did the local masters object, for they shared the craft’s views on what was fair and just. Many, as journeymen in Britain, had taken part in the struggle. In 1874, without fanfare, the masters agreed to the fledgling branch of the ASC&J’s request for a forty-four-hour week.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the founding generation of immigrants in both the union and Caversham, those who arrived in the 1860s and 1870s, left Britain before the employers

launched their counter-attack on the issue of authority on the job. In the late nineteenth century British employers, determined to re-establish their control on the job, worked with the ASC&J, which also wanted to destroy local autonomy, to establish industry-wide conciliation and arbitration procedures to root out the older anarchy of work-site negotiation. In the process 'economism' replaced 'custom' and hours and wages became the only legitimate areas for bargaining. Restrictive practices—limitations on overtime, apprenticeship ratios, walking time etc.—disappeared from the national agenda for collective bargaining (although the locals did not surrender so readily).<sup>21</sup> The new concern with social discipline, efficiency and industrial order had few echoes in the colony until a generation later, when the men of the building trades had established their control of the job and elaborated still further rights. The large-scale contractors who dominated the British building industry by 1900, most of whom lacked craft training, did not exist here. Even when large firms emerged during World War I they never enjoyed comparable market dominance and the founders had invariably served apprenticeships.<sup>22</sup>

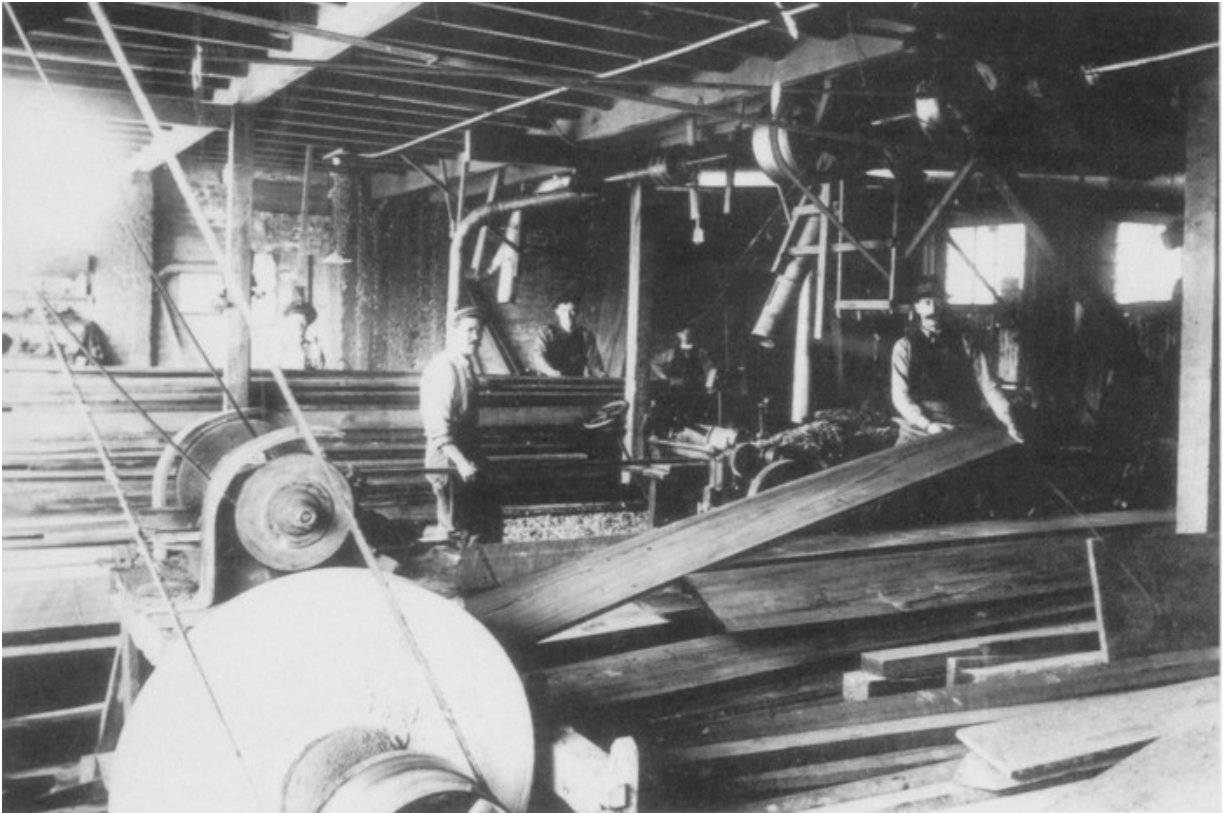
Thorn typified the men who became dominant here. Throughout his life he remained passionately committed to self-improvement and union as the key to enhancing the dignity of labour. He and his wife helped establish Caversham's Primitive Methodist congregation and he soon joined the Mechanics Institute Library and the Templars, a temperance organisation. 'Drink, etc., abounds out here equal to home and the results are worse ... you are shunned, no support, no relieving officer to go to, no charity, etc., etc., as at home. Each one must stand on his own legs.'<sup>23</sup> Most of his energies in these early years went into establishing himself, not to mention the other brothers and sisters who arrived. First he worked for wages and saved and then he borrowed to build a cottage, which he sold, while renting a home and workshop on Marion Street (now Thorn Street). He and his fast-growing family occupied this house for the next sixty years although he bought it only years later (thus ensuring that his family would not lose its home if he went bankrupt). He set up on his own account as a 'Carpenter, Builder, and Undertaker' (his recipes for embalming corpses indicate that he inherited this trade from his father).<sup>24</sup> According to the 1882 'Freeholders Return' he already owned land valued at £1,000.

Unionism and radical politics absorbed much of Thorn's energy in this period. As president of the Otago Trades and Labour Council Thorn helped to articulate a new political agenda. He also convened and then presided over the first conference of all the colony's trade unions in 1885 (more fully discussed in Chapter 7). Thorn did not attend the 1886 Conference, which met in Auckland, and had probably begun devoting himself to his own business. He now had seven children, and in 1887 had to file for bankruptcy.<sup>25</sup> Over the next decade he played little part in politics or community affairs. The union's records indicate that he maintained his membership but was not active. He also strongly supported the Liberal-Labour party. By the end of the 1890s he again had his business on a secure basis, having returned to speculative building and property buying. Early in the new century he won a position on the Caversham School Committee, which he later chaired, and during World War I he won the first of two elections to the city council as the representative of Caversham ward. By now he owned almost thirty houses, but his sons, who all entered the trade, had largely taken over the business. As with C.J., however, this did not stop them belonging to the union, although as the ASC&J phased out the benefit scheme he let his membership lapse. By 1916, for the first time, the union had no Thorn as a member.<sup>26</sup>

Because of his role in the 1885 Conference C.J. enjoyed some status as an 'elder statesman' of the labour movement. When he occasionally travelled north of the Waitaki River, as he did in 1910, he invariably made a point of calling at Trades Hall in every city where he stayed.<sup>27</sup> He lived to see the next 'Great Depression' and died in 1935. He had already transferred the business to a family company in which he and his children all held shares. He also seems to have sold all his properties but for the family home and to have transferred the proceeds to his family. In death as in life he was prudent and fair. The estate was sworn at less than £6,000 and was divided equally between all his children or, where they had already died, their children. He left his tools to his son, George, and his household effects to his daughter, Sarah Lucy Brough. She had looked after him in his old age.<sup>28</sup>

The early experience of the city's most ambitious carpenter is also

instructive. James Fletcher had been born near Glasgow in 1886 and was one of thirteen children when his father died in 1896. After deciding that he did not want to be a chemist he served his apprenticeship as a joiner, the third generation of his family to enter the building trades. He served his time in a shop where 'Everything was done by hand ...'.<sup>29</sup> Once out of his time he worked as a journeyman but he wanted to leave Britain. Pneumonia persuaded him not to emigrate to Canada but he heard a lecture on 'New Zealand, the Sunnier Britain of the South', and set off around the world, £3 in his pocket and a £12 bank draft preceding him by post. He liked Melbourne and would have taken work there but his toolbox was already en route to Dunedin, so he followed. Carpenters and joiners usually prized their toolboxes and tools, some inherited and some bought, more than any other possession and they represented a sizeable capital investment. The desire to insure them provided an important reason for joining the Amalgamated Society. Fletcher arrived in Dunedin in 1908, during the winter downturn, but did not join the union. 'Very little building was going on, and there were a fair number of unemployed tradesmen looking for work.' Those with work were busy building wooden cottages, a relatively unskilled task. Generally, as he later told his biographer, a builder and a carpenter did all the work. Perhaps this explains why it took him four days to find work.<sup>30</sup>



*The planing department at Fletcher Brothers' Joinery Factory on Cameron Street, c. 1913. The planing department contained the planing and moulding machines. They dressed the timber, taking over the role once played by the hand-held jack planes (to remove the rough-sawn face), trying planes (to straighten the surface), shooting planes (to obtain dead-straight edges), and a great variety of moulding planes. The machine worked by forcing the wood at high speed through the cutting knives (fixed in rapidly rotating blocks). A specialised spindle moulder was needed to produce curves. It is not known which machines were bought by Fletcher and Morris, but at first they probably used a lathe, a spindle moulder and a versatile general joinery machine which could, once set, cross-cut, plane, edge, tongue, groove and bore. It could also do straight and circular moulding, mortising and tenoning. Fletcher Challenge Archives.*

Fletcher arrived in Dunedin determined to start out on his own. Like other canny migrants, Fletcher made haste slowly. He worked for Crawford and Watson and then, wanting experience in a joinery factory, for Thompson and Bridgers, who specialised in joinery work and made kitset cottages. He mainly built stairs, working with 'old Tom Schofield, ... the wizard of stair-building in Dunedin ...'.<sup>31</sup> Schofield—sometimes rendered Scofield—was almost seventy years old, had lived in Dunedin almost forty years, and like most English immigrants belonged to the union.<sup>32</sup> With the help of such men Fletcher extended his skills and mastered his new environment, found a partner he could trust, Bert Morris (an Englishman

who lived on Leckhampton Court), and contracted to build a cottage at Broad Bay for £375. The partnership had a capital of £40, each partner putting up half, and they borrowed some tools (without charge) from Crawford and Watson. They hired a carpenter, Alex McGregor, and took on one apprentice. Fletcher had never made a house entirely of wood. As a result the cottage was a splendid example of the joiner's skill but they made a net profit of only 3/6d.<sup>[33](#)</sup>

After several other small contracts the partners found themselves over-extended, having finished a job before learning that State Advances was footing the bill, 'which generally took a month ...'. The bank refused them temporary accommodation, but an old Scotsman lent them £100. Slow payments for their next contract, three cottages in Kew, forced them back to wage labour. Fletcher, a determined and resourceful man, finally extracted the money but the partners decided 'we could make greater progress if we had a joinery factory ...'. They leased land in Cameron Street, Kensington, erected a two-storey joinery factory, appointed McGregor the manager, and hired 'old Tom Schofield' (although he did not stay long, as he began drawing superannuation from the ASC&J in 1913). In 1911 the omens looked good when they obtained the contract for the St Kilda town hall. James married and bought a house in Musselburgh, just beyond St Kilda, where many builders and carpenters lived, and his brother William, a stonemason and bricklayer, arrived with £1,000. As work proceeded on the town hall, James also built a brick bungalow in Albert Street, St Clair, where his family lived for the next five years.<sup>[34](#)</sup>



*When the timber had been rough dressed it went to the yard to weather. The yardman did not serve an apprenticeship, but he needed to be orderly, careful and reasonably strong. Fletcher Challenge Archives.*

The fledgling firm next won the contract for the dormitory block and the chapel at Knox College. 'At this stage Bert Morris, learning that we were owing the bank ... over £2,000, said that he was getting to the stage that he could not sleep, that we were growing far too fast, and was there a possibility of him being bought out.' Morris never had any regrets, always saying, 'I was never born to worry'. In that phrase Morris measured the gulf between the men of the trade, whether journeymen or masters (for most masters actually paid themselves wages), and the entrepreneurial world which Fletcher helped to create.<sup>35</sup> Fletcher, wisely, studied double-entry bookkeeping at nights and contract followed contract. His cousin, a skilled tradesman, arrived to become foreman, and during the war two more of the Fletcher brothers joined the firm. From 1911 until 1923 Fletcher Brothers Builders remained on Cameron Street while the firm built the Scott building for the medical school, the nurses' home, the Empire Theatre, and a new building for Whitcombe and Tombs. The firm also expanded into Auckland

and Wellington, and James and his family moved to Wellington in 1916. They returned to Dunedin in 1923, but by 1924 the *Directory* gave the joinery factory's address as Stuart Street.<sup>36</sup>



*James Fletcher (seated fourth from right) and his father-in-law, with the factory staff, c. 1913. Fletcher Challenge Archives.*

James Fletcher undoubtedly had unusual talents and remarkable ambitions. He combined a flair for business, great skill in finding talented people, enthusiasm for managing people, a passion for new technologies and the exacting skills of his craft. '[A]nyone who knows that firm', as one unionist said, 'knows that they will not have anybody but first-class men to work for them.'<sup>37</sup> He forged a team that went from success to success. Unlike Shacklock and Thorn, who resisted the process whereby the firm's growth threatened to take them away from their craft and turn them into managers, Fletcher enjoyed growth and success more than anything else. In 1920–21 Fletcher Brothers took up contracts valued at about £750,000 and more growth lay ahead. In later years he looked back nostalgically to the years of the war when he still knew all of his employees and got pleasure

from noticing a man with skill and initiative and giving him jobs that fostered those talents. By 1934 Fletcher had moved so far from the unstable world of cottage construction that he opened a dialogue with the socialists of the Labour Party in the hope that they could bring order, stability and predictability to the entire construction industry.<sup>38</sup> During the depression he also built a substantial brick home on High Street among the city's wealthy merchants and professionals.<sup>39</sup>

Most carpenters would have found Fletcher's vision and his extraordinary drive quite alien. They wanted to ply their craft, have regular work (one of Fletcher's main management goals) and a high enough hourly rate to reward them for their skill and allow them to have a home of their own, support their wives and families and live decent and respectable lives. The evidence suggests that few regretted their choice of trade, for carpenters who died in this period were often succeeded in the *Directory* by sons practising the same trade. And those carpenters who became builders—who set up on their own account like Fletcher and Morris—differed little from the men they employed. Most builders worked on their own account and hired a journeyman. They wanted no more work than they could actually do themselves and had no flair for business. Many formed partnerships with another carpenter rather than working alone, probably to share the risk, but the partners usually continued to ply their saws, chisels and hammers. One senses that the great majority would have agreed with a young English Christian socialist, R. H. Tawney that 'the past has shown no more excellent social order than that in which the mass of the people were masters of the holdings which they ploughed and of the tools with which they worked, and could boast ... "it is a quietness to a man's mind to live upon his own and to know his heir certain"'.<sup>40</sup>

Nine carpenters who died during the period and left wills sharpen this picture of modest aspirations and contentment. Of these nine men the most successful was Andrew Anderson, builder, whose estate and effects were valued at just over £3,472. He had no children and left legacies to his seven nieces and the rest to the Glendining Orphanage at Anderson's Bay. Of the builders, only Thorn left a larger estate, suggesting that most of those who set up on their own account did not earn much more than wages. Only one

other estate was valued at approximately £1,000, one at almost £700, two at under £450, one at under £300 and one at less than £250. Like the shopkeepers and tradesmen of the area, none were wealthy men. The mean of their estates was £869 and the median £575.<sup>41</sup> It perhaps says something about the democratic subculture of the trade that all these men divided their estates equally between all their children.


The other twenty-two Caversham carpenters who died during this period, however, died intestate. Five of them died while resident in the Benevolent and two had no address other than the Public Hospital. Nor can their lack of assets be explained by their youthfulness at death; eleven of them were older than seventy and only four were younger than sixty when they died.<sup>42</sup> ‘Old Tom Schofield’ may have been typical. The city’s best stair-maker died in his own home on Christmas Eve 1921, aged eighty-one years. One suspects that owning his own home and section and knowing that his children had good jobs and good prospects more than satisfied him. Many of these men, no doubt typical of the rank and file, had invested most of their savings in the union’s benefit section and drew superannuation in their old age. One of the last, ‘Brother’ J. J. Roberts, died in 1925 and the ASC&J voted £7 for his funeral expenses, one guinea to the minister and wrote a letter of thanks to the Benevolent Institution. The union also voted to inscribe Roberts’s name on the union’s tombstone in the Anderson’s Bay cemetery.<sup>43</sup>

### III


The discussion of mobility and success obscures the fact that most carpenters principally wanted independence and security. They could obtain work in most industries, go anywhere, and either work on their own account, form a partnership, or work for wages. They took great pride in their skill and their tools. This was especially true of the joiners. Despite the onset of mechanisation, freelance joiners remained in demand throughout the period and they always had the option of working as carpenters or cabinet-makers. In 1909 the local ASC&J convened a conference to discuss how best to distinguish joinery from cabinet-making, probably because new technologies had eroded older distinctions. Neither craft seems to have been

at risk although new machines transformed both. In 1917 the ASC&J ruled that joiners working as their own machinists were not eligible for accident insurance.<sup>44</sup> Stonemasons, by contrast, found that the increasing use of brick and concrete threatened their position. Throughout this prosperous period they had trouble finding work. Edmund Anscombe designed the city's last stone house in the early 1920s and H. S. Bingham, a stonemason who survived by becoming an ornamental mason specialising in tombstones, lovingly built it.<sup>45</sup>

Telegraphic Address : "HAIGH, OLDHAM." ESTABLISHED 1855.



HAND MORTICE MACHINE.



BAND SAW MACHINE.

# W. B. HAIGH & CO., Ltd.,

## OLDHAM.

Manufacturers of every description of

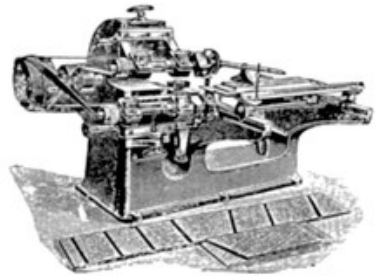
### Wood-Working Machinery.

Makers also of

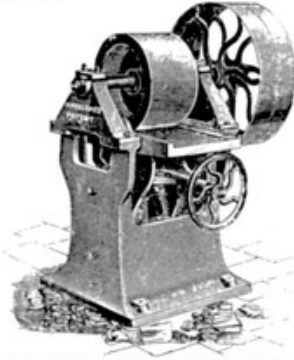
### STEAM ENGINES,

High and Low Pressure,  
Compound, Tandem or Coupled


Catalogues and Price Lists sent on Application.



IMPROVED TENONING MACHINE.



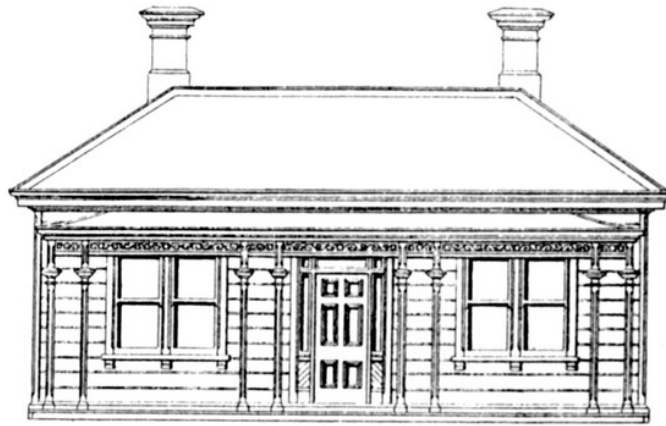
"PATENT" RAPID PLANING MACHINE.



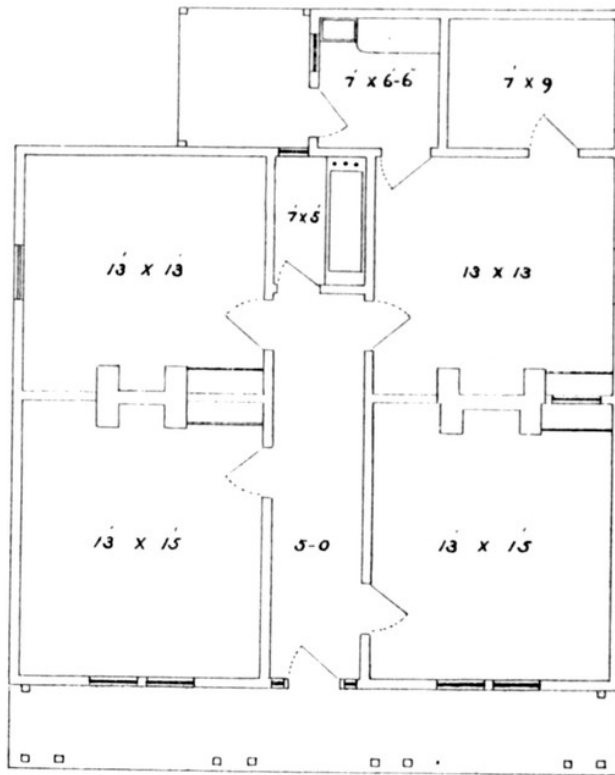
CIRCULAR SAW BENCH.

*Technological improvements expanded the work which could be done by less-skilled machinists, but the skilled men maintained their control of the labour process throughout the period and often acted as their own machinists. This advertisement shows the main joinery machines.*

THE DUNEDIN IRON AND WOODWARE COMPANY.



FRONT ELEVATION



PLAN  
5

PRINCES AND BOND STREETS SOUTH, DUNEDIN.

*Kitset homes were very popular in the 1880s and 1890s. As a result most joiners worked in factories, but their skill was essential to jiggging machines and doing complex work. This type of house was common on The Flat. In time a great variety of 'cottage' styles received separate names, borrowed from Britain but with new meanings. Detailing*

*admired in England, such as stone quoins, was often reproduced in wood.*

Carpenters faced the threat of redundancy less because of mechanisation than because the basic skills could easily be learned. Cottages, the major form of house construction, did not require much skill to erect. These were made entirely of wood and much of the work could be done with a couple of saws, a square and a hammer (especially if a kitset cottage was being assembled or even if a joiner made the windows and doors). As a result, men with rudimentary skills had always been able to make a living in the building industry. Building labourers often picked up enough knowledge to tackle simple construction tasks and all senior boys at primary school learnt the simpler skills in woodworking. In boom times, as the union's secretary complained, anyone who 'used a hammer and saw occasionally' could claim to be a carpenter.<sup>46</sup> Until 1890, the union, which consisted of men who had served a full six-year apprenticeship and could afford one shilling a week, ignored those they considered inadequately trained. Instead—confident that most work could be properly done only by men of their skill—they and their union simply tried to maintain an appropriate rate of pay for themselves. Where that proved impossible the member would be withdrawn and placed on the unemployment benefit. Unemployment caused problems mainly because desperate men tendered for work at prices which destroyed the standard rate (unemployed union members simply went on to the union's unemployment benefit). In 1888 the *Otago Workman* reported men tendering at 'scarcely one fourth of the net cost...'.<sup>47</sup> '[T]he existence of a class of workmen who are through our rules prevented from joining our union, they not being ... fair average mechanics', forced the ASC&J to organise all those working as carpenters. The attempt failed.<sup>48</sup>

In 1905–6 the union returned to the task. Following a recommendation from the Australasian District Council, the branch debated establishing a trades section for less skilled men and men who did not want the elaborate insurance that the society offered.<sup>49</sup> In 1906 the Dunedin branch organised a trades section, began inviting local radicals and union leaders to address them on the principles of industrial unionism, and agreed to admit anyone who had worked for five years in the trade so long as he was 'a competent workman of steady habits and good moral character'.<sup>50</sup> This change

coincided with the news that their brothers in Wellington had obtained a preference clause from the Arbitration Court, a measure which required employers who wanted to hire labour to come to the union first to see if the union had any unemployed members. If so, they had preference. In return, the branch had to admit any 'steady workman of good habits' and keep an employment book listing all unemployed members. After organising a trades section in 1906 the local branch obtained a preference clause.<sup>51</sup> The new trade section grew rapidly despite the fact that its members subsidised the benefit section. In 1909, when the New Zealand branches of the society held their first national conference, the delegates voted to keep the two sections.<sup>52</sup> Despite the spread of industrial unionism the first national conference did not discuss establishing a building trades federation. In Dunedin building labourers remained separately organised.<sup>53</sup>

The trades section and the separate organisation of building labourers did not remove all threats to the standard rate. Under-rate permits, first authorised by the Arbitration Court in 1904, became very contentious. Even the amendment act of 1905, which required the chairman of the local Conciliation Board to invite the union's secretary to attend the hearing, did not entirely solve the problem.<sup>54</sup> More important than under-rate permits, at least after 1906, was the need to increase the union's ability to police the award throughout the industrial district of Otago and Southland. In 1908–9 the local branch established an Otago District Council and subdivided itself into three separate branches (including one in South Dunedin). It also appointed an organiser to recruit members in country districts and form branches in towns such as Oamaru and Invercargill. Edward Kellett, the organiser, proved very effective. In 1916, having organised the province, he set out once more to organise a building trades federation and helped to establish a Central Labour Office for all Dunedin unions. The local branch retained its autonomy, however, and pursued these goals in order to protect the forty-four-hour week and the standard rate.<sup>55</sup>

The standard rate embodied the carpenters' pride in their skill and their skill provided the foundation for their independence. Despite their cumbersome toolboxes, they moved as and where they chose. Like other artisans they kept alive the old custom of tramping during their early years as journeymen, often with a mate.<sup>56</sup> This may partly explain the fact that

143 of the Dunedin union's 533 members went to war (26.8 per cent), at least ninety-one of them as volunteers.<sup>57</sup> Given the local branch's age structure this was a remarkable level of patriotism (in 1910, 27 per cent were younger than thirty years old and another 34 per cent were in their thirties). Clearances—needed by transient members to remain in good standing—also indicate a very mobile population. By and large, however, only the young and single members moved. Throughout this period, when some thirty Scots and thirty English members of the ASC&J arrived in Dunedin, the 'tramp' had involved a trip around the world. Many of these young men had also worked in other English-speaking countries. In the 1900s, thirty-three members took clearances to leave Dunedin and only twelve intended moving to other towns in New Zealand. Of the 128 branch members who survived the war, to take another perspective, only sixty-eight returned to Dunedin. Only a rare young carpenter or joiner—like Fletcher—moved with the intention of setting up in business. Most of the young movers wanted to see the world and get experience. Membership of the union provided not only an entry point to the new town, but financial support if work proved hard to find. Almost 42 per cent of those members arriving in Dunedin in this period received the unemployment benefit for a time while they looked around.<sup>58</sup>

Older men with wives and children did not move as often or as far. Although 40 per cent of members first joined the ASC&J before they married, almost 57 per cent joined in their first year of married life, suggesting that many skilled men regarded union membership as part of the responsibilities of adult married life. Older members were less likely to move away from Dunedin permanently although, especially in lean years, they might resume 'tramping' in search of work while leaving their families behind. Married members with families, however, were much more likely to move within the suburb or the city as they sought to find a better home or area.<sup>59</sup>

Exceptions exist for every generalisation. Some carpenters with families moved in search of opportunity, whether for themselves or their children. Take the case of Richard Grimmett, for instance, a bricklayer and stonemason, who had arrived in Caversham in 1873 with his wife and seven children (two more were born, but one of them lived for only one year). He

built Faringdon Villa in Fitzroy Street, plied his trade for many years and became a building contractor. He died in 1906, a staunch member of the Salvation Army (he had been bought up a Primitive). His oldest son, also Richard, moved to Wellington and then Sydney (his son, Clarence, becoming one of the most famous spin bowlers of his day). Rowland, the eighth child (born in 1873) also became a carpenter, married and had five children. Although the *Directory* occasionally listed him as living in Faringdon Villa, he actually lived next door until his mother died in 1921. He played an active part in the union until he resigned in 1919 to set up on his own account. By 1928 he belonged to the Master Builders' and lived in Bayfield Road, St Kilda, but he remained fiercely pro-Labour. Both sons entered white-collar occupations, although one first did an apprenticeship as a wood-turner.<sup>60</sup>

If the carpenter's independence rested on the twin foundations of geographic mobility and social mobility he also enjoyed independence on the job. Even on large construction sites the foreman allocated work but left the 'chippy' to decide how to do the job and what tools he needed. The 'chippy' provided the tools and made sure that he had the right ones at hand. He also decided how quickly the job could be done, but as master, foreman and journeyman had been socialised into the craft's custom they rarely disagreed on such issues. On larger construction sites the foreman, usually a carpenter and a member of the union, spent most of his time coordinating the different trades and supervising the labourers who hauled timber and bricks for the skilled men and generally did the heavy physical work. On smaller sites, where most carpenters spent most of their working lives, the master enjoyed control but relied on the journeyman's craft knowledge and skill. Here the journeyman might have an apprentice to run errands, boil the billy for smoko, fetch tools and lend a hand. On smaller sites the carpenter might also contribute to the analysis of any problems and their solution. On small sites especially carpenters often retained control of the labour process and got considerable job satisfaction.



*Richard Grimmett, stonemason, bricklayer and building contractor. He built Faringdon Villa, an elegant example of the bricklayer's craft. It still stands on Fitzroy Street today. Courtesy Bert Grimmett, copied Reg Graham.*

The principles of mateship usually governed the organisation of work on small sites. Mateship could be—and often was—exploited by builders hard pressed by creditors (a relatively common problem during recessions). Most builders—like Fletcher and Morris—only had a little capital and very few had much in the way of assets other than their tools. They either built ‘on spec’—that is as a speculation—or contracted to do a job, usually by tendering. If building ‘on spec’ they had to be shrewd judges of the market; if tendering they had to get their estimates right. In either case they had to buy the materials some time before being paid and success required certain business skills. Failure might result in having to sell off assets, such as a bicycle or even a house, or even bankruptcy. If partners borrowed to expand, the dangers grew. This anxiety caused Morris to lose his nerve. For anyone who had not mastered double-entry bookkeeping, borrowing

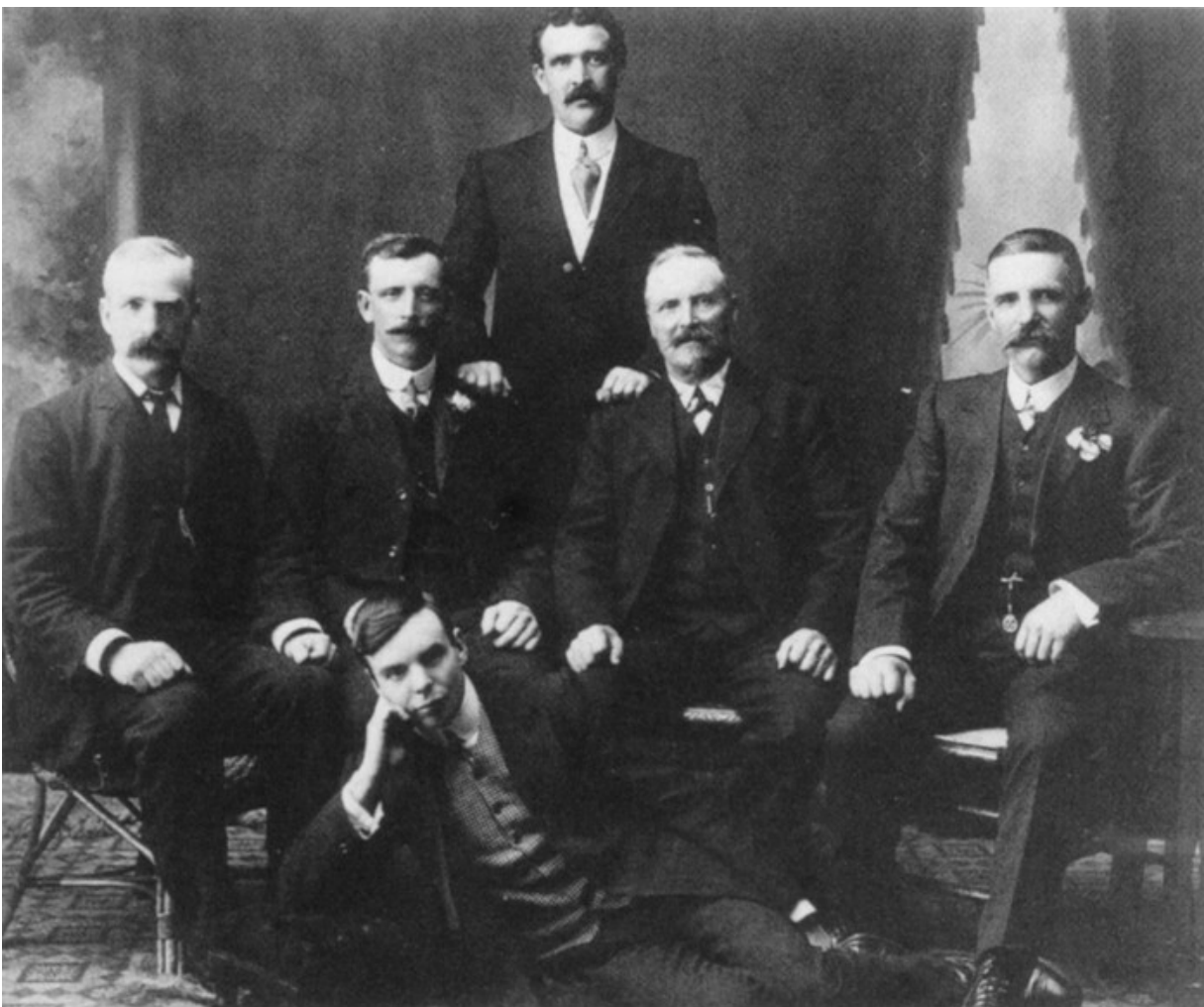
money was a large gamble. A downturn in the local or national economy could catch the prudent as well as the feckless and even in good times anyone could miscalculate or be deceived by an unscrupulous client. At that point builders invariably tried to get their employee(s) to wait for their wages as they grappled with (what we now call) a liquidity crisis. If they went bankrupt, however, the carpenter lost out completely because unpaid workers were not secured creditors before 1892 and even after that date had little likelihood of recovering all of their unpaid wages.<sup>61</sup> Confronted with this sort of crisis some (but not many) masters tried to drive the men to work harder and faster; despite mythology, bullying proved less effective than self-exploitation. The standard rate for the job applied, therefore, not only to pay but to contract prices. Even in 1918, at a time of heightened class feeling, the union joined with the Master Builders in defending competitive tenders.<sup>62</sup>

To focus on problems creates a misleading impression. The small scale of most building usually made for informal and congenial relationships. The two men—or even the five men—interacted as equals. All had been trained in the craft and shared a common culture of work. They usually interacted as equals and deflected any tensions towards the apprentice, whose training inevitably involved being the butt of practical jokes and abuse, or unscrupulous masters who tendered at ‘unfair’ prices. The men were usually on first-name terms and if any had occasion to speak to the wife of a workmate she would inevitably be addressed formally as ‘Missus’. Masters extended the same courtesy. (Some older craftsmen, like Sam Lister the printer, addressed their own wives as ‘Missus’ or ‘Ma’am’.) The men worked together and usually ate lunch and took smokes together. They often lived in the same area or the same street and belonged to the same organisations. Indeed many journeymen in any year had at some point been self-employed or masters. The very fluidity of the industry helped gird the peace. If the ‘chippy’ disliked a mate, a master or a job, he could leave. Even before the local ASC&J received its first award from the Arbitration Court in 1900, guaranteeing most customary arrangements, no legal restraint bound them to their employers. The Masters and Servants Act had been left behind with the crowded tenements. In the New World the legal obligations of marriage constrained them much more than their legal status

as employees.

## IV

Carpenters enjoyed a high level of control over their job and over which job they took. Their skill no less than their membership of the craft gave them a strong sense of pride, and they enjoyed a high level of geographic and social mobility. Unfortunately, there is no extant diary from a carpenter and none wrote memoirs. The biographies of Thorn and Fletcher are by definition atypical. If we had a diary it would probably have more about the weather—for carpenters often lost time (and pay) when it rained—than anything else. The fullest records are those of the union, and while not all carpenters belonged, by studying those records we can illuminate further the world of the carpenters. We can also attempt to define more precisely the circumstances under which men joined a union. In short, as is commonly the case in social history, the effort to uncover the world of people who left no records forces one to tease from all available sources whatever one can. That our two main sources—the Caversham data and the union's records—are about different groups of carpenters demands a certain analytical caution. For all that, these two sources allow a clearer glimpse of the skilled men of the building trades than any previous research.<sup>[63](#)</sup>



*The Otago District Council of the ASC&J, 1912: they bowed to no man. Hocken Library.*

The ASC&J recruited 58.3 per cent (140) of all the carpenters who lived in Caversham between 1900 and 1922. At any one time the Caversham carpenters constituted only a proportion of the union's members and there is little evidence to suggest that they had any community identity (the ASC&J experimented with a Dunedin South branch in 1911–12 but it quickly disappeared). Besides Thorn, however, several of the union's leaders lived on The Flat. J. B. Taverner, once a 'chippy' but now a tobacconist and estate agent, regularly attended to champion the benefit section. Men such as W. H. Warren of Kensington, John S. Loydall, and W. S. Callender of South Dunedin held the union's presidency for much of the period and acted as elder statesmen for the branch.

It is not clear why eighty-four of the carpenters who lived in Caversham across the period did not belong to the union. Membership of the Otago

branch rose and fell between 140 and 200 members until the Arbitration Court granted the Dunedin branch a preference clause. The proportion of non-members, slightly over 40 per cent, seems quite high although only similar studies elsewhere would show whether it was, in comparative terms, high or low. Some non-members, like Fletcher, may have been so determined to set themselves up in business that they saw no point in joining, preferring to obtain whatever insurance they wanted elsewhere. Others may have first entered the trade in rural areas of Britain or New Zealand and viewed unionism with distaste because of its exclusionary policies. Still others may have grown up in white-collar or business homes and regarded unions with hostility, while those in the Hillside workshops may have preferred to join the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. It is also possible that some men objected to the union's strict refusal to tolerate either subcontracting or piece work.<sup>64</sup>

Besides, the union had strict entrance requirements and it is possible that some described themselves as carpenters to the agents for *Stone's Directory* but lacked the skill to qualify for membership. All members had to have served a six-year apprenticeship in carpentry or joinery. After the union changed its membership rule to meet the requirements of the Arbitration Court, by accepting five years' work in the trade, older members sometimes jibbed. Trouble erupted during the war, for instance, when the Union Steamship Company hired anyone who could swing a hammer in order to convert merchant ships into troop transports. One man, a competent journeyman by all accounts, boasted that he had not served an apprenticeship. His mates demanded his dismissal and at the union hearing demanded to see his indentures. As the secretary explained, however, indentures had become irrelevant.<sup>65</sup>

Before 1906 the high subscription fee also made the union attractive only to prudent men. As late as 1906 almost half the members had first joined in England or Scotland, but by 1910 the New Zealand born outnumbered the 'homeys', as they came to be called after the war.<sup>66</sup> According to many sources the New Zealand born seemed more confident or careless of the future. By and large they preferred to put savings into a building society or a savings bank (Taverner formed The Flat's first building society, Starr-Bowkett, around 1907). Perhaps, too, they did not

expect their occupation to be a life sentence. Before 1906, when the Court granted a preference clause and the union established a trade section, most non-unionists may have been New-Zealand-born, older men (hardly anybody joined after his fortieth birthday), or those who plied the craft but did not meet the union's rigorous entrance requirements. Even after the Court granted unqualified preference in 1912 the union retained a more rigorous entrance requirement than most other unions, despite the Court. The New Zealand trade section, established in 1911, retained the local branch's rule that trade members subscribe 3d a week for insurance against unemployment and theft. It rose to 6d a week in 1916.<sup>67</sup>

Thanks to the preference clause the union grew rapidly. The membership leapt 70 per cent in 1907 and continued to grow rapidly until 1913, when the branch claimed 573 members.<sup>68</sup> Within a couple of years the trade section had outstripped the benefit section and by 1910 only one-third belonged to the latter. Older men also now joined. Almost all members of the benefit section, known as the ordinary section, joined when they were in their twenties (70.3 per cent) or thirties (26 per cent), probably when they married. Over its first four years the trade section attracted 42 per cent of its members from men in their twenties, but sizeable groups joined in their thirties (14.3 per cent), forties (19.25 per cent), and fifties (12.4 per cent). By 1910 the two sections had quite different age profiles. Almost 80 per cent were younger than fifty, but only a quarter of them belonged to the benefit section. Members began to argue about the wisdom of combining benefit and union functions any longer. Some believed, with Kellett, that 'unless the Society did away with all benefits, it was doomed. Bro. Taverner said he hoped not ....'<sup>69</sup> The battle became quite bitter but the benefit section declined, crippled by excessive payments and inadequate recruitment. In 1922, in compliance with an explicit ruling from the Court of Appeal, the union began phasing it out.<sup>70</sup> In 1925, despite a fierce rearguard action by a handful of old members, the benefit section of the Otago Branch voted 96–48 to liquidate itself and divide the assets equally. Twenty abstained.<sup>71</sup>



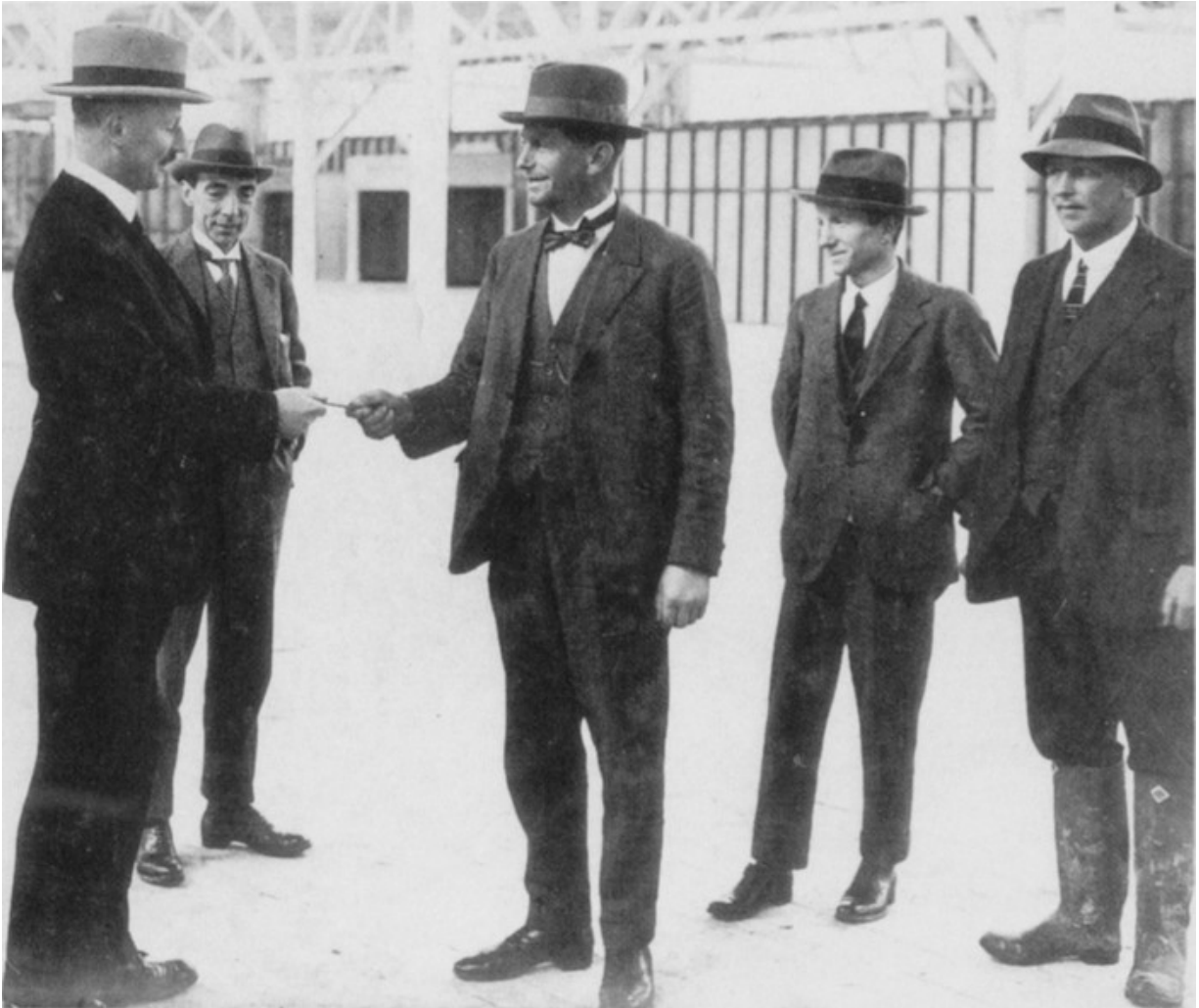
*A large crowd watches as Fletcher Construction and Love's commence work on the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition buildings in 1923. In the left foreground trucks are unloading materials and a specially constructed railway siding has been installed. Courtesy Naylor Love, copied by Reg Graham.*

The importance of the benefit section throughout the period and the age structure of the union made the members cautious about strikes. In 1910 a little over 38 per cent of them had been twenty years old in 1890, a year of industrial unrest in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The local union's hostility to strikes and head-office (Manchester) levies to support British strikes may have reflected this, as did the unions commitment to arbitration. A strike-free industrial world, a central feature of the social laboratory, had deep roots in the structure of work in the building industry. Well before 1890, however, the carpenters had been renowned for their 'conservatism'.<sup>72</sup> The high proportion on small work sites, the relative ease with which they could become masters, their transience and their control of the labour process may also have induced conservatism. Only the threat that the building labourers would infiltrate their craft roused them (as we shall see in Chapter 7).

The usual attendance at branch meetings varied between twenty and

forty members. These men, the activists, strongly believed in independent political action by labour. Most were wary of entangling alliances with militant northerners, but they often bemoaned the apathy of the rank and file and

complained that 'the workers defeated their own class ...'.<sup>73</sup> There are always difficulties in linking names between two lists but a high proportion of men listed as members of the union living in Caversham in 1908 and 1911 could not be found in the electoral roll. Unlike railway workers, the carpenters' daily work was not greatly affected by government. As a rule only those union meetings to discuss the minimum conditions and wages for the trade attracted large attendances (although 180 members turned out in 1913 to hear about the 'Unity' Conference and the branch's battle with the national executive). During the war the cost of living came to be seen as a political issue.



*J. Y. Love hands the key to the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition complex to J. Sutherland Ross, chairman of the Exhibition company. James Fletcher is second from the right, and Bob Love, in gumboots, is probably the figure on the right. Courtesy Naylor Love, copied Reg Graham.*

Indifference to politics did not mean the absence of political ideas. The immigrants who founded the union, like Thorn, had clear agendas, shaped by their backgrounds. Although by 1910 only 21 per cent of the members were immigrants they continued to play an important role. If we use the town where members first joined as a proxy variable for birthplace, in the period 1900–1910 some thirty members came from England, most of them from the Midlands or Lancashire. Some thirty-one Scots also arrived in the 1900s, one-third of them from the Glasgow area. (The Scots, interestingly enough, were almost unrepresented in the ASC&J until the 1900s.) By comparison, however, the Irish were missing. Even in 1910 only two members had first joined in Ireland and both came from Belfast. More

members had come from South Africa (3), the United States (5) and Australia (7). As in other skilled trades, the strategies of exclusion had marked ethnic connotations. Cheng Chuen, who died in the Benevolent in 1905, never belonged.

The post-1900 immigrants from Britain came from an industry riven by conflict as employers tried to achieve control of the labour process. It seems likely that these immigrants, like the previous generation, came to New Zealand to preserve a world in which they could continue to enjoy, if not extend, their independence. They were certainly very alert to any sign that the Old World ills they had left behind might take root in their new land and they revitalised the union's commitment to apprentice-based crafts, payment by time and the standard rate. Although they never questioned the need for a capitalist mode of production or capitalist social relations, they insisted on controlling the labour process. The small scale of construction in Dunedin, not to mention the ease of geographic and social mobility, played a crucial role in enabling these skilled men to achieve their ends on the job. Accountants and bankers played almost no part in the local industry and the largest contractor, by British standards, was very small. Perhaps this explains how these conservative craftsmen, or at least the union activists (including some employers), easily accepted the central tenets of Guild Socialism at the end of the war, the abolition of 'the wages system' and 'control of industry by Trade Unions'.<sup>74</sup>

The local branch, like local branches elsewhere, spent more energy fighting head office than in fighting employers. In 1889–90 and again after 1900, the local branch, like others in Australasia, demanded more autonomy. In 1890, Manchester, the head office, established an Australasian section but this did not satisfy the New Zealand branches. In 1905–6, when the local branch recognised the potential advantages of arbitration, it also recognised that the demands of the New Zealand law could be used to extract from Manchester more local autonomy. The declining proportion of immigrants doubtless hastened the demand for 'Home Rule' so that the branches in New Zealand could evolve with the most progressive society in the world. Their success in obtaining a preference clause and the rapid growth of the trade section saw Dunedin's carpenters become increasingly involved in New Zealand society and the local labour movement. Irritants

grew. In 1905, Brother G. Dunn resigned to protest against 'sending large sums of money to England and refusing bare justice to its local members'. Another member later complained about the delay in sending accident claims to Britain and the idiocy of the rule denying insurance to anyone who had not kept his tools in a locked chest.<sup>75</sup> Applications for awards, breach of awards and chasing up members in arrears took up more and more time.

A similar process occurred in other branches (as it did in the local branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, another benefit society with its headquarters in Britain). Yet in Dunedin's ASC&J, unlike the Auckland branch, nobody championed the Red-Fed ideology of class war and industrial unionism. Their own experience, the desire to control the job and irritation with control from abroad persuaded them to seek unity with the other New Zealand branches of the ASC&J. In the process the New Zealand branches increasingly demanded the right to work out their own destiny because they wanted 'a Trade Union, dealing with Trade Union affairs only'. Working within the arbitration system had become their top priority. They also wanted the freedom to quickly accept new reforms, such as the amended Workmen's Compensation Act (1908), without having to change the rules of the entire society.<sup>76</sup>

It was a call for Dominion status. In 1909 all the New Zealand branches sent delegates to a national conference. In 1911 they formed a national executive and council, elected a national secretary and began drafting new rules. In 1913 the ASC&J, now the largest registered union, obtained a Dominion award.<sup>77</sup> Not that increased Dominion autonomy made the local branch much happier. Throughout this period conflict characterised relations with the national secretary, Ivor Hazell, and the executive board. Relations with the Otago Master Builders were quite cordial by comparison. W. H. Warren of Kensington, one of the branch's oldest members, together with other leading local figures, most of them from Caversham or South Dunedin, had reorganised the Otago branches in 1909–11. They resented the executive board's attempt to tell them how to run the union locally. In April 1913 Warren, president of the new Otago District Committee and the local branch, threatened to resign and the branch refused to authorise its share of the national secretary's salary. In May it threatened to secede if the

executive board ‘persist[ed] in the antagonistic attitude’ to Otago; in June it refused to nominate any delegates to the executive board, having no confidence in that body, and issued ‘a revolutionary chastisement’. Warren, the branch delegate to the July ‘Unity’ conference in Wellington, met the executive board and hammered out a compromise, but the tone of the next letter from Wellington infuriated the branch. Warren moved that the letter not be received.<sup>78</sup> In the end, however, the advantages of national unity prevailed over fury at Wellington’s high-handedness. Yet Wellington had to concede local autonomy. In 1916 a united ASC&J successfully pushed to obtain ‘Home Rule’. Localism had triumphed.<sup>79</sup>

The idea of national autonomy grew out of the artisans’ sense of manly independence no less than out of the conflicts between the needs of the New Zealand union and the imperial organisation. Interestingly, however, no ‘chippy’ portrayed the relationship with Manchester in metaphors of family life, although colonists often used the mother–son relationship to define Britain’s relationship with New Zealand. Instead the local branches demanded autonomy on the grounds of fairness, justice and equality. These values, together with mutualism or mateship, were central to their working lives, their union, the social laboratory and the developing critique of its shortcomings. The most striking change in the period 1908–22 was that those carpenters active in the local union not only continued to behave like independent artisans but developed a belief in the need for an independent Labour Party. Although the union’s minutes do not make the process entirely clear it seems as if a consensus emerged that only in this way could the social laboratory—based on fairness, justice and equality—be protected and extended. True, the active members led the way, often bemoaning the apathy of the rest, but what seemed an infinitely slow process to men like John Loydall and W. H. Warren, seems, in retrospect, astonishingly quick.<sup>80</sup>

Even before obtaining ‘Home Rule’ the society embodied in its own rules many key aspects of the social laboratory. A potential member had to have been nominated and seconded by existing members and admitted by vote or ballot at a meeting which all members could attend. The new member then joined a highly democratic society of ‘brothers’ in which all enjoyed the same rights. Until the introduction of the trade section, equality of contribution—and carpenters (like most skilled) despised those who did

not pay their dues or pull their weight—lay at the heart of the society's existence. Once admitted, one was obliged to attend quarterly and summoned meetings—'Fail not to attend, or the Fine will be strictly enforced'. This proved impossible to enforce, although attempts were made. All officers had to run the gauntlet of a quarterly election. The management committee was meant to notify all members by mail of forthcoming meetings and select delegates to other bodies and conferences. The branch ignored both rules, preferring more democracy and less formality, to the annoyance of Manchester.<sup>81</sup>

For benefit members the society was a proto-welfare state, and the membership card, which contained full information about the member's financial standing and clearances, entitled him to benefits from any branch in the world. Before 1910 the branch spent a lot of time on administering benefits. The very term 'benefit', later adopted by the first Labour Government, conveyed the sense of entitlement as well as the idea of mutual assistance and protection. The scheme provided insurance against loss or theft of tools, the need to travel, loss of earnings due to sickness and unemployment, together with superannuation and a funeral benefit.<sup>82</sup> Extensive regulations governed the administration of these benefits. Only the executive council in Britain could grant some. Those in receipt of benefits—other than sickness and funeral—had to attend branch meetings to receive the money. The local branch regularly elected trusted older members to investigate claims and scarcely a meeting took place where some claim did not have to be considered. By 1906 the sickness and unemployment benefits were worth thirty shillings a week. The secretary administered the latter through a 'Vacant Book' and unemployed members became eligible for the benefit within three days of signing on. Except during recessions there were never more than six on the book at one time. In short, the society began as a friendly society and became a union.

Tensions between the ASC&J's two functions existed throughout the period although the proportion of benefit members declined. Benefit members got upset whenever the society altered the scale of benefits, as it did when the New Zealand Executive Board was formed in 1912, and again in 1916 when local autonomy and 'Home Rule' triumphed.<sup>83</sup> The trade section's second-class status also created problems in a self-consciously

egalitarian and democratic organisation. It seemed unfair, especially to older men in the trade section, that the union offered them no assistance when faced with sickness or old age. In 1909 the branch established a benevolent fund into which all members, including those in the trade section, paid ten pence a year. It is not clear from the union's records whether this scheme worked at all, for they continued to levy members on behalf of those in 'destitute circumstances.' In the 1920s branches elsewhere appealed increasingly for donations. They invariably received a guinea or two for their pains but unions in other trades, especially from outside Dunedin, usually had their request forwarded to Wellington.<sup>84</sup> The idea that help should be available on the basis of need had begun to profoundly erode the older view that help had to be earned by individual thrift and prudence. The minutes often reveal the way in which the discussion of 'hard cases' sharpened the members' sense of equity and moved them towards a universalistic ethic. The growth of the trade section accelerated the process. Although the benefit function lost ground and disappeared, it left a powerful legacy of mutualism. In Dunedin, as throughout Australia and New Zealand, most members may have wanted to be an arbitration union rather than a benefit society, but they easily came to regard the need for benefits as a 'matter for the state to provide'.<sup>85</sup>

## V

The union's minutes also reveal a growing concern with the boundary between masters and workers. The former hired labour and the latter sold it. Therefore they represented not just different classes, but classes with diametrically opposed interests—or so socialists would have argued. When members left the trade they invariably resigned. For instance, in 1905 one member, having inherited a small legacy, decided to set up as a confectioner. The branch accepted his resignation and wished him well.<sup>86</sup> When members of the benefit section set up on their own account or became contractors they did not usually resign, however, even when the union cited them as parties to an award. The formation of the Master Builders' Association in 1906, largely to oppose the union's quest for a preference clause, first brought the issue to a head. The Invercargill branch

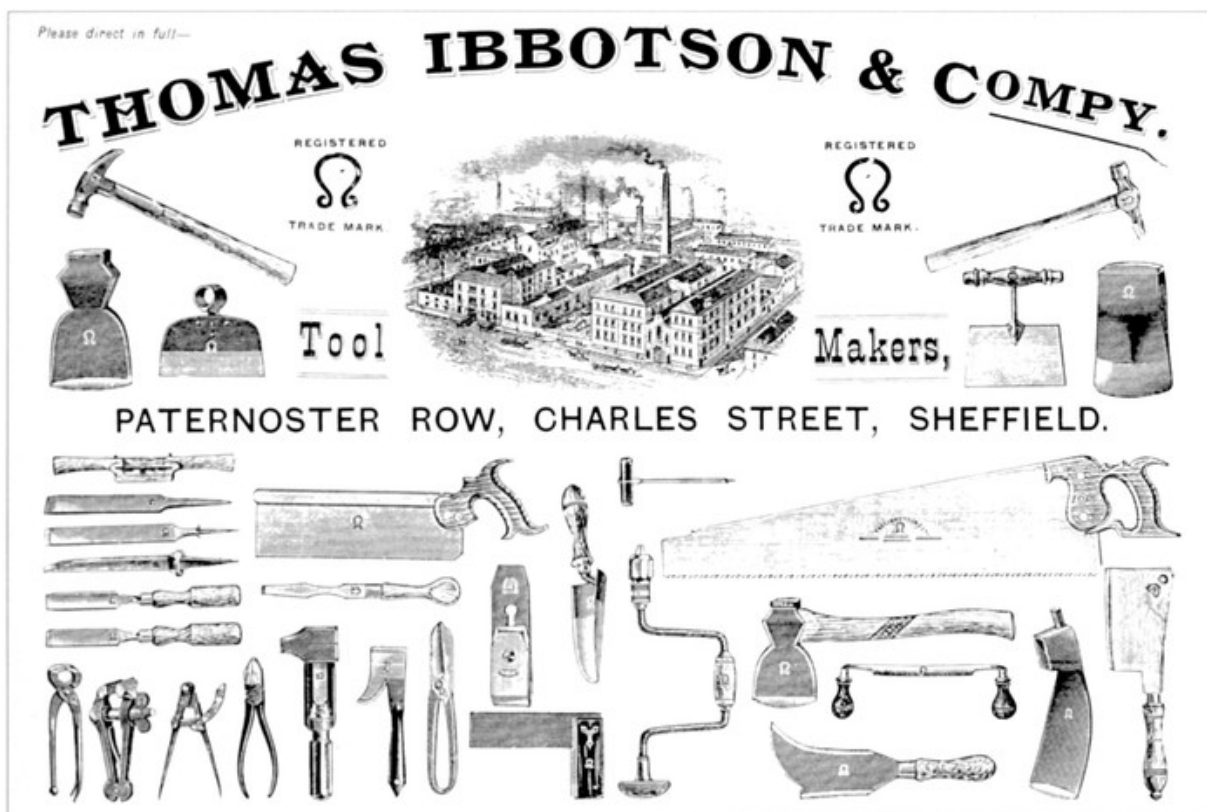
wanted all contractors banned from meetings and denied benefits because their presence ‘is doing a lot of harm ...’.<sup>87</sup> Dunedin agreed and demanded that Manchester give the Australasian District Council power to expel them.<sup>88</sup> Before getting a reply the Dunedin branch, fed up, summoned three members of the Builders’ Association to a meeting and gave them one month’s notice to withdraw. One of the men refused, saying they would have to expel him.<sup>89</sup> There is no record of any expulsion but the issue must have been resolved. In 1910, Brother Love resigned ‘owing to starting as an Employer’ and, in 1911, Brother Lillie resigned, having paid his arrears, ‘as he had started business on his own account’.<sup>90</sup>



*In the 1920s the building industry was transformed as Fletcher's and Love's combined to undertake enormous construction projects. This photo shows the almost completed Exhibition buildings in 1925. No wonder Bert Morris could not sleep. Courtesy Naylor Love, copied Reg Graham.*

Masters did not invariably resign. C. J. Thorn, who had been running his own business since the end of the 1870s, retained his membership for another forty years. In 1910 he drew a sickness benefit but only attended meetings when matters affecting the benefit section came up.<sup>91</sup> J. B. Taverner also remained a member despite becoming a contractor and agent.

After he went on the superannuation benefit he again regularly attended meetings.<sup>92</sup> The number of employers who retained their union membership actually peaked at twelve in 1917 although only Taverner, who died the year before, regularly took part. By 1920, however, only one employer remained on the union's books. Even in the mid-1920s the union often had 'several members who work on their own and still remain a member of the Union as when their work gets slack they then go and work for a boss and enjoy the full privileges of Union membership'. The union did not mind unless they joined the Master Builders' Association.<sup>93</sup> With the end of the benefit section, of course, masters had no reason for retaining membership. Even so, in 1928 only six of ten builders living in Caversham (and eight out of fourteen in South Dunedin) belonged to the Master Builders' Association. In Otago and Southland only 36 per cent of builders belonged to the Association.<sup>94</sup>



*Tools and most machines were imported from 'the workshop of the world', great industrial cities such as Sheffield and Manchester. Carpenters and joiners owned their own tools and prized them greatly.*

The idea of a craft cut across the lines of class cleavage even after

arbitration institutionalised employers and workers as oppositional (and old union stalwarts like Thorn and Grimmett joined Fletcher in the Association). Because of that, few issues proved insoluble in conciliation proceedings (from 1906 onwards disputes focused on wages, penal rates and preference). Nor did the potential division between unionists and non-unionists become a source of conflict, even though activists found it hard to credit.<sup>95</sup> Work-site organisation and bargaining remained more important than the union even though, under arbitration, the union had a role to play in establishing minimum wages and conditions. These simply outlawed unscrupulous workers and employers by institutionalising the consensus about what constituted a fair wage, a fair day's work and a fair price. Even in the 1920s the union's minutes often refer to 'journeymen', 'craftsmen' and 'masters'. Sometimes, when the business meeting finished before the members wanted to go home, they would discuss saws or planes with intense interest. Under the new apprenticeship system established in 1923–24 they played a full part in administering training, nominated a director to the Technical College's Board and helped establish the curriculum. The interests of the craft or trade were their interests and these continued to be more important in many ways than the ritualised disputes with the masters. The fact that many employers, like Taverner, chose not to join the Master Builders so that they could retain their membership of the union, indicates the vigour and vitality of the traditions of the trade. 'We are always pleased to hear of our members making a start in business for themselves', and the fact that so many did, and that all masters had been socialised into the custom of the craft, undoubtedly provided the final buttress to the carpenters' control of the labour process. Even Fletcher believed in arbitration throughout his life although the Arbitration Court, as we shall see in Chapter 8, gave legal protection to the carpenters' control of the labour process.<sup>96</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Clark, 'Dunedin in 1901', p. 48. For the situation in London, see Ernest Aves, 'The Building Trades', in Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People of London*, London, 1895, v. 5, pp. 31–160 (the work is discussed on pp. 72–74).

[2](#) OW, 8 March 1889, p. 4.

[3](#) These figures were derived from linking the names in the union's 'Membership Book' with the names given in the electoral rolls. For this exercise I used all last names beginning with the letters G through T. A further linking exercise was made with the names given annually in the D-3 list of the Railways Department, *AJHR*, D-3 *passim*. The 'Membership Book' is part of the archives of the Otago Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (hereafter ASC&J), Hocken Library.

[4](#) It might be argued that the thirty-one who died need to be added to the stable total or eliminated from the total population.

[5](#) This analysis is based on the union's 'Membership Book', 1914-20. Fifteen died on active service.

[6](#) This sketch relies on *Stone's Directory* and Anscombe's obituary in the *Evening Star*, 11 Oct. 1948, p. 6; 'Certified Copy of Entry in the Register Book of Deaths, no. 125419'; his *The Inside History of the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition, Dunedin, 1925-26*, London, 1928; and Hardwicke Knight and Niel Wales, *Buildings of Dunedin: An Illustrated Architectural Guide to New Zealand's Victorian City*, Dunedin, 1988, pp. 72-75.

[7](#) *AJHR*, 1906, H-11 and *passim* for earlier years.

[8](#) *Ibid.*, p. xvii-xviii.

[9](#) *Department of Labour Journal*, v. 17 (Aug. 1909), p. 815. This monthly journal provided intermittent reports from various unions on the state of various trades. The union's own records suggest that twenty members signed on; see above p. 206.

[10](#) 'Local Department: Dunedin', *AJHR*, 1910, H-11, p. xxxv.

[11](#) 'Report ...', *AJHR*, 1911, H-11, p. iii and for the 'Local Report ...', p. vi.

[12](#) 'Local Report: Dunedin', *AJHR*, 1915, H-11, p. 17; *passim*, 1916-25.

[13](#) C. E. Hunt (Sec.) to T. Driver, 23 Nov. 1923 and to R. McArthur 28 Nov. 1923; 'Notice of Meeting for 11 Dec. 1923' and 'Notice of AGM, with Minutes of AGM, 18 Sept. 1925', ASC&J MSS.

[14](#) Peter Stearns, *Lives of Labour*, ch. 2 provides a useful discussion of why workers chose particular jobs.

[15](#) This is similar to the pattern discovered by E. W. Rogerson, "'Cosy Homes Multiply": a Study of Suburban Expansion in Western Auckland,

1918–31', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1976.

[16](#) The number of employers has been calculated from the Department of Labour, *Awards*, v. 1 (1894–1900), pp. 466–7; v. 4 (1903), pp. 299–303, v. 12 (1911), pp. 879–84; v. 18 (1917), pp. 454–60; and v. 21 (1920), pp. 524–9. The union's membership is taken from the *AJHR*, 1901–22.

[17](#) ASC&J Minutes, 18 Nov. 1910 and *Directory*, 1914, pp. 447 (Clark) and 549 (Love).

[18](#) Richard Price, *Masters, Unions, and Men: Work Control in Building and the Rise of Labour, 1830–1914*, New York, 1980, pp. 61–65 and C. E. Hunt (sec. Otago ASC&J) to Nat. Sec, 8 April 1922, Letterbook, ASC&J MSS.

[19](#) Thorn to 'Mother, Bros. & Sisters', 17 Oct. 1875, kindly provided by Mrs Lorna Kent-Johnston.

[20](#) Joseph Allen, 'An Old Member's Recollections', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, July 1914, pp. 21–22.

[21](#) Price, *Masters, Unions*, pp. 156–7.

[22](#) *Ibid.*, ch. 6 for the new system

[23](#) Thorn to Mother *et al.*, 17 Oct. 1875.

[24](#) Thorn MSS, Hocken Library.

[25](#) *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, v. 12 (1887), p. 237.

[26](#) 'Membership Book', ASC&J MSS and Susan Patullo, 'Caversham and The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners in Dunedin 1900–20', 452 class essay, OU, 1983.

[27](#) He kept a diary during this trip which is now in the Hocken Library.

[28](#) His will, dated 7 March 1934 and Probate 14557, High Court Library, Dunedin.

[29](#) James Fletcher, 'Autobiography', pp. 1–7, Fletcher Challenge Archives, Penrose.

[30](#) *Ibid.*, p. 7 and Neil Robinson, *James Fletcher: Builder*, London and Auckland, 1970, p. 24.

[31](#) Fletcher, 'Autobiography', p. 9.

[32](#) 'Membership Book', ASC&J MSS.

[33](#) This 'cottage' would more usually be described here as a modest villa, but British immigrants often used 'cottage' to describe any domestic building made of wood. The house still stands and the Historic Places Trust has classified it.

[34](#) Fletcher, 'Autobiography', pp. 9–12. For Scofield's superannuation, ASC&J Minutes, 10 Jan. 1913.

[35](#) Fletcher, 'Autobiography', pp. 12–13.

[36](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 14–28, 33; Robinson, *Fletcher*, pp. 29–30; and *Auckland Star*, 9 Oct. 1965, p. 5.

[37](#) 'ASRS Executive Interview with General Manager of Railways Wellington May 11th 1923', published as a supplement in *RR*, 6 April 1923.

[38](#) Olssen, *John A. Lee*, Dunedin, 1977, p. 93.

[39](#) This handsome home with its Dutch gables still stands, J.F. proudly staring at the street, and it too has been classified by the Historic Places Trust.

[40](#) Cited by C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*, New York, 1956, p. xxi.

[41](#) The wills, held in the High Court, were searched by my research assistant, Lizzie Harrison.

[42](#) I have excluded from these calculations fifteen carpenters who died on active service during World War I.

[43](#) Minutes, 1 May 1925.

[44](#) Minutes of the ASC&J, 15 Nov. 1909, 31 Aug. and 28 Sept. 1917.

[45](#) Almost every annual report from the local Department of Labour mentioned the problem; *AJHR*, H–11, 1906, 1908, 1913, *passim*. For Bingham's house see Knight and Wales, *Buildings of Dunedin*, p. 74.

[46](#) C. E. Hunt (Sec. ASC&J) to R. Cairns, 18 Feb. 1924, ASC&J MSS.

[47](#) 9 Nov. 1888, p. 5.

[48](#) Minutes of the ASC&J, 31 May, 26 July, and 6 Sept. 1890; for the first meeting of the new Building Trades' Union, see *OW*, 7 June 1890, p. 4; and for similar developments in Auckland, John F. Ewen, 'A History of Trade Unionism among the Carpenters and Joiners of the City and Suburbs of Auckland, 1873–1937', MA thesis, VUW, [1947], pp. 25–27.

[49](#) Minutes of the ASC&J, 24 April 1906 and 15 March 1910.

[50](#) *Ibid.*, 24 April and 8 May 1906 and 8 Jan. 1914.

[51](#) *Ibid.*, 23 June 1906. This gave it the power of a monopolistic labour bureau. Only during the war, when the Union Steam Ship Company began employing carpenters to adapt merchant ships for transporting troops, did the union briefly lose control because it had not cited that company as a party to the award; e.g. Minutes, 23 July 1915.

[52](#) Management Committee Minutes, 15 March 1910, ASC&J MSS. Tom Bloodworth, 'A Word to Carpenters', *Maoriland Worker*, 14 July 1911, p. 4 said that the Manchester Conference had authorised such a step in 1910 to meet the conditions prevailing in Australia and New Zealand.

[53](#) In Wellington the building labourers had their own union, but in Dunedin many were organised by the General Labourers' Union; see Stephen Kennedy, "'Really Concerned Men": A History of the Dunedin Labourer and His Union 1905–1911', research thesis, OU, 1978, pp. 32–33.

[54](#) Minutes, 19 May and 18 Aug. 1906. In 1923 the local secretary complained that the system needed reforming; E. C. Hunt (Sec.) to Sec. Christchurch ASC&J, 19 Dec. 1923, Letterbook. For the background see Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration*, pp. 60–61.

[55](#) For the federation see Minutes, 26 May, 9 June, 20 Sept. 1916, 24 Oct. and 19 Dec. 1919, and 16 Jan. 1920; for the Labour Office *ibid.*, 2, 16 March and 27 April 1917 and for further discussion see above p. 219.

[56](#) E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour*, London, 1968, ch. 4.

[57](#) This figure has been calculated from the 'Membership Book' and the 'Contribution Book'. See also *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Oct. 1916, p. 8, which stated that very few in Auckland had volunteered.

[58](#) 'Unemployment Book', ASC&J MSS.

[59](#) These findings are consistent with Tom Brooking, David Thomson and Richard Martin, 'Persistence in Caversham', Caversham Project working paper, 1992.

[60](#) Transcript of my interview with Mr Bert Grimmett, 24 May 1993, pp. 1–2.

[61](#) Olssen and Boyd, 'The Skilled Workers ...', *NZJH*, v. 22 (Oct. 1988), p. 125.

[62](#) Minutes, 19 July 1918.

[63](#) The records of the various New Zealand branches, together with those now held in London, are sufficiently full to allow a surprisingly detailed study of carpenters and joiners in the English-speaking world. It is surprising that nobody has used them other than a Dutch scholar, Pieter Van Duin, 'White Building Workers and Coloured Competition in the South African Labour Market, c. 1890–1940', *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 59–90.

[64](#) See Olssen, Boyd, and Thomson, 'Social Mobility in Caversham', Caversham Project working paper, 1988, for the extent of downwards mobility; ASC&J Minutes, 5 March 1915, where the organiser said he had recruited forty new members in the workshops; and Aves, 'The Building Trades', in Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People*, v. 5, p. 141.

[65](#) Minutes, 23 July and 6 Aug. 1915.

[66](#) The 'Membership Book' records the branch that members first joined.

[67](#) Unqualified preference allowed employers to hire anyone but they had to join the union to keep their job; see *Awards*, v. 12 (1911), p. 889 and *AJHR*, 1912, H-11, p. xii.

[68](#) *AJHR*, 1900-22, H-11 (before 1912 it was the Dunedin branch but thereafter the Otago branch). There is usually a discrepancy between the membership listed by the Registrar of Unions and the figure in the union's own contribution book. The latter is usually much larger but includes many men transferring out of the city and those who had become unfinancial.

[69](#) Minutes, 7 Aug. 1914.

[70](#) The Court ruled that no union registered under the Arbitration Act could pursue any purpose not sanctioned by that Act; 'Ohinemuri Mines and Batteries Employees', *New Zealand Law Reports*, v. 36 (1917), p. 829.

[71](#) Minutes of Special Meeting of benefit section members, 21 March 1925; Minutes of Ordinary Meeting, 3 April and 1 May 1925; Minutes of Executive, 11 Sept. 1925; and Minutes of AGM, 18 Sept. 1925.

[72](#) J. D. Salmond, 'The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement from the Settlement to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1840-1894', Ph.D. thesis, University of NZ (OU), 1923, pp. 340-2. See *Red Feds*, pp. 76-77, for further analysis of the role of age cohorts.

[73](#) Minutes, 30 April 1915. The Dominion Executive Board and the National Secretary, Ivor Hazell, resolutely opposed union involvement in politics, much to the annoyance of local activists; see Loydall's letter in *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Sept. 1912, pp. 6-7.

[74](#) Minutes, 19 July 1918, and for Britain, Price, *Masters, Unions*, ch. 6. For further discussion, see above p. 219.

[75](#) Minutes, 24 June 1905 and 'Fellow Members', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, May 1914, pp. 6-13.

[76](#) Management Committee Minutes, 15 March 1910.

[77](#) ASC&J, *Conference of Delegates Representing New Zealand Branches*, Aug. 1909, Wellington, 1909, p. 18.

[78](#) Minutes, 18 April, 30 May, 13 and 27 June, 1 and 22 Aug. 1913; 26 June, 10 July, 18 Sept., 16 and 25 Oct., 2 Nov., 23 Dec. 1914 and 8 and 26 Jan. 1915.

[79](#) 'Local Autonomy', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Jan. 1914, pp. 25–26; 'Under Rate Workers—the Bone of Contention', *ibid.*, April 1914, p. 11; E. Morton, 'For Your Consideration', *ibid.*, May 1914, pp. 23–24; 'Fellow Members', *ibid.*, pp. 6–13; and Ivor Hazell, the retiring national secretary, 'Address', *ibid.*, Dec. 1916, pp. 6–8. See too ASC&J, *Amendment of Rules*, Wellington, [1916]; and Minutes, 19 Feb., 11 and 25 June, 23 July and 9 Oct. 1916.

[80](#) Debates occurred about which national body to join but issues relating to political strategies and affiliations appear frequently in the Minutes from 1909 onwards.

[81](#) This paragraph is based upon the procedures and practices seen in the branch minutes. For an example of Manchester's annoyance, see Minutes, 2 July 1909.

[82](#) By 1916 claims for loss of tools had virtually disappeared from the Minutes and in 1923, when the Water of Leith flooded and ruined the tools of many members, the union organised a public subscription; see *ASC&J Monthly Report*, 2 May 1923. In 1906, in an effort to conserve funds, superannuation became available only to men who had been 'totally incapacitated'. In return they had to serve as doorkeepers. It seems likely that the Old Age Pension made the union's superannuation scheme largely redundant.

[83](#) See Ivor Hazell (National Secretary), 'Address', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Dec. 1916, pp. 6–8 and 'Secretarial Notes', *ibid.*, April 1919, pp. 6–7, 10–12.

[84](#) Minutes, 22 April 1909. See too 'Fellow Members', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, May 1914, pp. 6–13; and E. C. Hunt (Sec.) to Sec. Auckland Painters' Union, 25 March 1922 and to Sec. New Plymouth ASC&J, 12 Feb. 1924, Letterbook.

[85](#) See Minutes, 6 July 1917 and, for the quotation, 21 May 1920.

[86](#) Minutes, 9 Dec. 1905.

[87](#) *Ibid.*, 3 March 1906.

[88](#) *Ibid.*, 12 May 1906.

[89](#) *Ibid.*, 22 May 1907.

[90](#) *Ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1910 and 10 March 1911.

[91](#) *Ibid.*, 6 May 1910.

[92](#) E.g. *ibid.*, 2 May and 12 Dec. 1913 and 26 July and 7 Aug. 1914.

Richard C. Torrance of Park Street, Kensington, is another example; see *Cyclopaedia*, p. 269.

[93](#) E.C. Hunt (Sec.) to W. Melrose, 29 Dec. 1922, Letterbook.

[94](#) *Stone's Directory*, 1928, pp. 742–4, placed an asterix besides each builder in the Trades Directory who belonged to the Association.

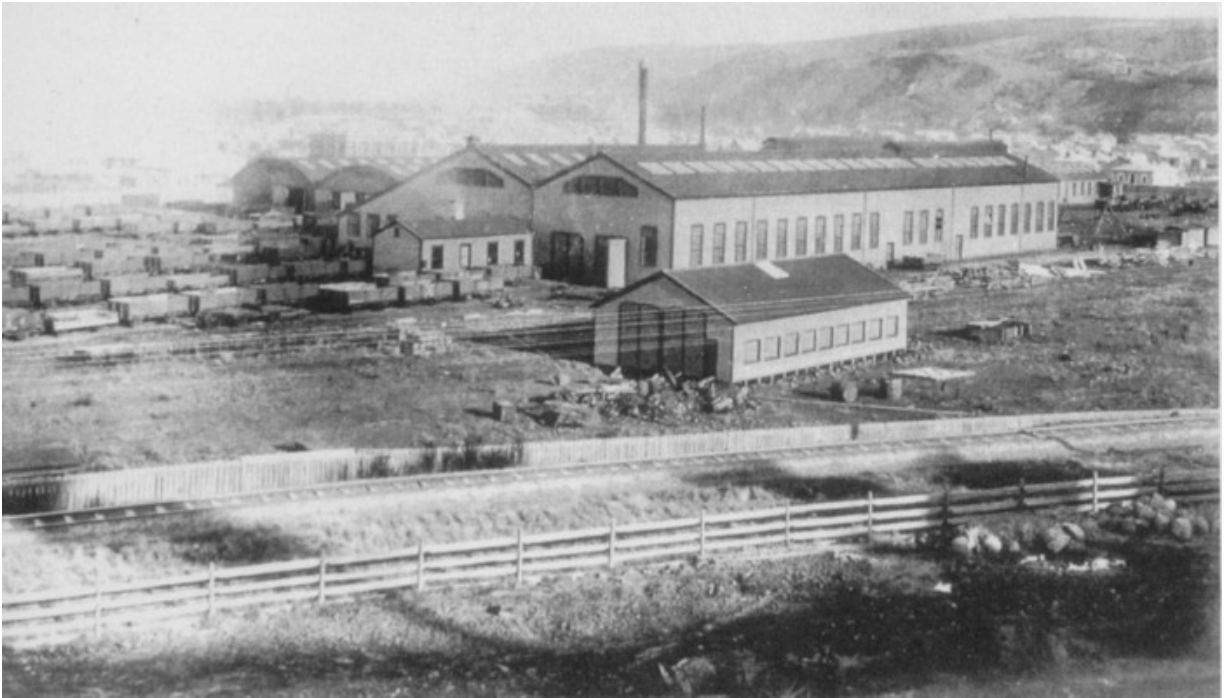
[95](#) Hunt (Sec.) to Nat. Sec., 8 April 1922, Letterbook.

[96](#) For the quotation, Hunt to C. O. Knewstubbs, n.d. [June 1923], Letterbook and for Fletcher, 'Autobiography', p. 45.

## CHAPTER 6

# *The Hillside Workshops and the Metal Trades*

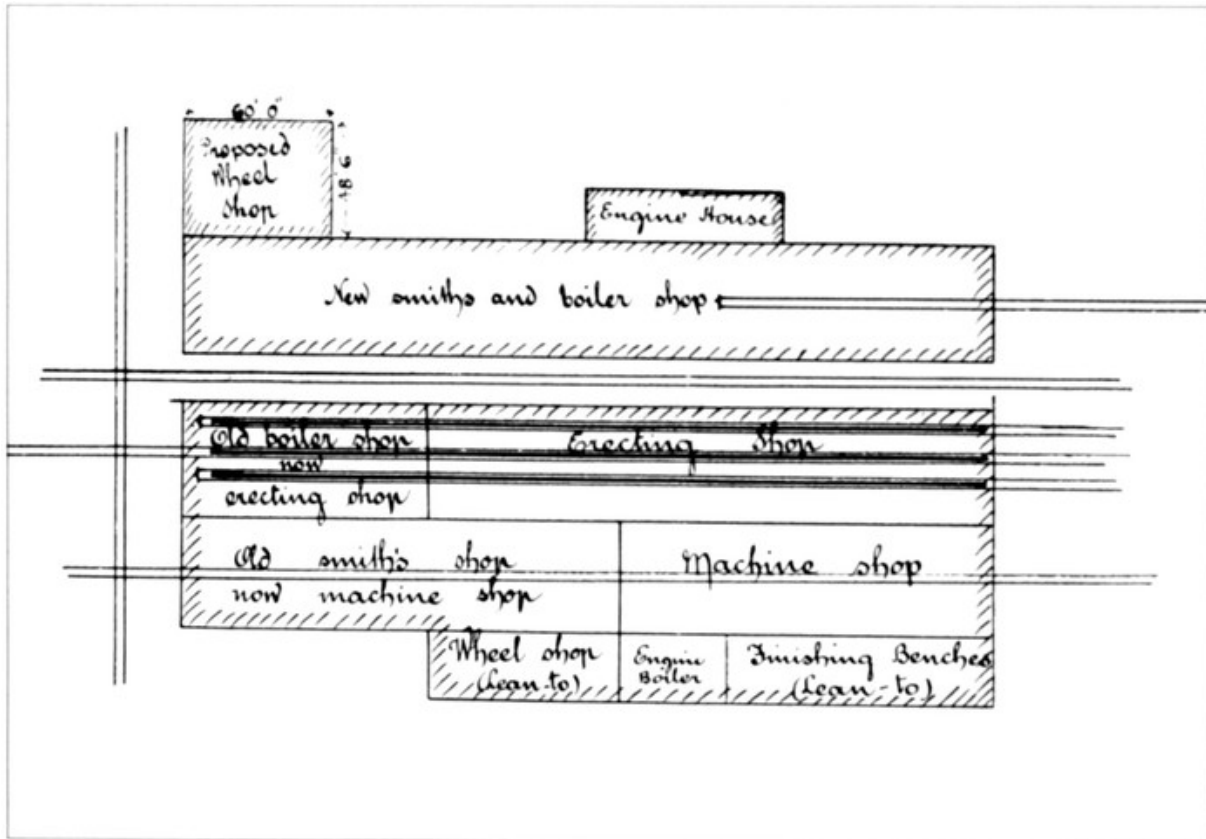
Only the men of the building trades outnumbered the men of the metal trades in Caversham. Several sizeable companies had their factories just north of Kensington, but the Hillside Railway Workshops were the biggest engineering factory in the city. The largest firms had their own foundries, as did Hillside after 1904, where moulders, fettlers, stokers and labourers made iron and steel which the metal workers then used to manufacture a wide variety of products. Following the collapse of the gold-dredging boom the men in private shops had a rough time. Many firms had invested heavily in capital equipment during the dredging boom of 1899–1904, which proved short lived, and firms in the new Australian Commonwealth displaced local ones from their export markets and then began competing in New Zealand. Shacklock's and Methven's prospered, however, and the railway workshops expanded and began making locomotives, 'another very important item in building up a self-reliant country'.<sup>[1](#)</sup>



*Hillside workshops (with the southern ridge behind). This photograph is by F. A. Coxhead, which suggests a date c. 1885. Hocken Library.*

In 1902 skilled metal workers constituted almost 20 per cent of Caversham's male population. This proportion rose to 24.3 per cent in 1905 and thereafter fluctuated within the range of 22 to 26 per cent. In absolute terms the number rose from seventy-four in 1902 to 129 in 1914, then fell during the war to 116 men in 1922. It is never possible to know exactly what proportion of the skilled metal workers living in Caversham worked in the railway workshops, because the Department of Railways did not publish lists of casual staff, but the men of the Hillside workshops became the most influential metal workers on The Flat, decisively shaping the social and political values of the area. In 1900 most of the permanent skilled men lived on The Flat, 76 per cent in all, of whom one-third lived in Caversham and two-thirds in South Dunedin. The proportion of these skilled men living in Caversham increased slightly over the next twenty years—from 25 to 28 per cent—but the proportion living in South Dunedin fell sharply over that period (from 51 to 25 per cent). St Kilda, Musselburgh and Tainui joined Caversham as the preferred residential areas for skilled men during the period 1900–20. By 1920 only 50 per cent of the permanent skilled men living in South Dunedin received the median wage (or more), compared to

around 70 per cent in Caversham and St Kilda, and even more in St Clair. Together with the semi-skilled machinists and skilled labourers, the men of the metal trades had a formidable presence.<sup>2</sup>



*The Hillside Workshops, c. 1910. National Archives.*

## I

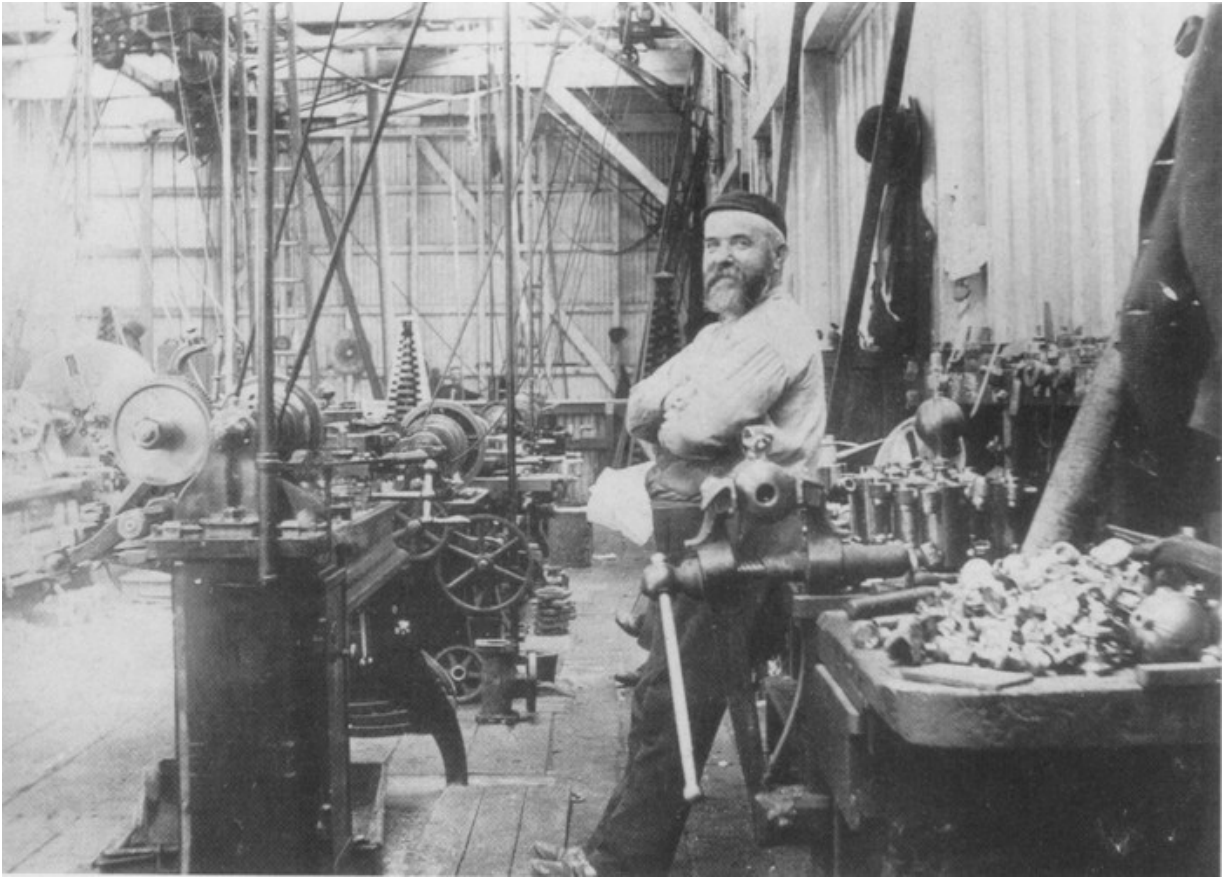
In 1874 the government let a contract to construct ‘repairing shops at Hill Side’, the small workshop at Port Chalmers no longer being able to cope with the demand. The next year the government bought a further twelve acres of land and the repairing shop, measuring 193 by 80 feet, was opened with pit accommodation for three locomotives.<sup>3</sup> Despite the construction of four more shops, by 1880 ‘the Hillside workshops [were] quite inadequate to meet the demands ... in respect of construction [of wagons] and the repairs of several kinds of stock’.<sup>4</sup> The Railways Department kept expanding the shops and providing new machinery throughout the ‘Long Depression’, but when

prosperity returned to the colony in the late 1890s the department approved new shops for the blacksmiths and boilermakers, a new spring maker's shop furnace, together with various extensions to existing shops, a new engine house and two new scrap-iron furnaces. Over the next fourteen years expansion continued, the foundry being opened in 1904. By 1905 Hillside was New Zealand's second-largest engineering shop, employing 400 men; by 1930 over 700 men worked there. The whistle that shrilled across The Flat at 7.30 am and 4.30 pm each full working day not only symbolised the work disciplines of an industrial society 'but provided residents with a built-in time keeper'.<sup>5</sup>

The workshops were organised—as in Britain and North America—into a series of departments based on skill. A visitor at Hillside in 1900 would probably have started in the machine shop, where the turners operated the lathes and did much of the precise and difficult finishing work and the semi-skilled machinists did the simpler work. Next door was the blacksmith's shop, where the smiths worked on the forges, hammering iron or block metal into its rough shape (usually, until locomotives were made at Hillside, broken or badly worn parts). The rough product—like castings from the foundry—went then to the machine shop. The boilermakers had their own shop where they repaired and made boilers, essential to any steam engine (although outside the workshops the boilermakers lost ground as gas, electric and diesel motors supplanted those powered by steam). They worked with metal thicker than one-eighth of an inch—the tinsmiths handling lighter metal—and were skilled at cutting, shaping and riveting. Then came the fitter. The fitter worked in the erecting shop and assembled the locomotives, wagons and carriages. Given the inexact nature of production, the fitters' skill was essential and wide-ranging. Although pay scales failed to reflect their status, they were widely seen as 'the elite' because of the wider opportunities their training gave them.<sup>6</sup> In many trades the skilled metal worker also had a labourer to assist him—helpers, strikers, holders-up, grinders, machinists (who sometimes listed themselves in *Stone's Directory* as engineers). The blacksmith and his striker had to work so closely together that the assistant knew almost as much about the craft as the blacksmith. In the fitting shop 'Every group of ten or twelve fitters had a couple of labourers, to keep the place tidy, and heat your bottle of tea for

dinner, and wheel stuff to the machine shop ... whereas you spent your time with a file or a hammer and chisel...'.<sup>7</sup> In each shop there were also apprentices, improvers, and yardmen.<sup>8</sup>

Although the engineering shops dominated the workshops there were several other shops besides the foundry. Apart from the patternmakers—highly skilled joiners who made the wooden moulds into which the molten metal was poured—the men who worked in the foundry did not serve apprenticeships but learnt on the job. The moulders packed the sand around the patterns and poured in the molten metal while the fettlers broke the castings into their components and knocked off the roughest edges. They were considered less skilled than the moulders. The men of the metal shops 'didn't have much to do with them ... [although] we knew them of course, a lot of them'.<sup>9</sup> The carpenters, painters and coachbuilders also had their own shops and unskilled men who worked alongside them. Although the Hillside workshops occupied sixteen acres by 1905, the largest shop rarely had more than fifty men and twenty apprentices, while the smaller shops had less than ten men and one or two apprentices. Skill, in short, was of fundamental importance to the labour process and social organisation within the workshops. Locomotive construction, which began at Hillside in 1897, united the various shops on one task and weakened centrifugal tendencies, but sectionalism was always likely to flare.<sup>10</sup>



*The machine shop in 1893. Steam-driven lathes, with shafts and belts untidily (and dangerously) scattered all over the place, were used to achieve the precise shape needed for each metal fitting. This picture was taken by William Williams, a keen photographer on transfer to the Hillside workshops in the 1890s. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

The dangerous nature of the work in most of the engineering shops and the foundry also generated unity. The 1901 amendments to the Factory Act attempted to standardise the requirements for protecting workers from machines—together with requirements for adequate drainage, ventilation and hygiene—but it had little impact on the level of accidents. In 1902, in all factories including Hillside, almost one in twenty workers suffered an accident. By 1919 the Hillside figure appears to have been about one in four.<sup>11</sup> About half of all industrial accidents in Dunedin usually occurred in engineering workshops, but most were classified as ‘minor’ (‘serious’ injuries and fatalities were rare). ‘Minor’ included the loss of part of a finger (not uncommon on lathes and planing machines), the loss or partial loss of sight from eye injuries, or more usually bruises, sprains, cuts and burns (especially frequent among moulders). ‘Serious’ accidents usually

involved the loss of two or more fingers, as in 1904, when one fitter lost four fingers in a hydraulic machine and another had to have two fingers amputated after they got caught in the gear wheels as he shifted a belt. Loose clothes and aprons sometimes got caught in the belts and shafts. Bill Pimley recalled a ‘chap ... caught [and killed] in a drilling machine’. After a death ‘no one would work ... [the machine] for a long time’; it was ‘black’.<sup>12</sup> The department compensated men for work-related injuries (all factory employees in the private sector could seek financial redress under the Workman’s Compensation Act of 1908 which paid 50 per cent of his weekly wage if he could not work for two weeks or more). Early this century—the exact date is unclear—a group of employees also formed the Hillside Ambulance Division (which soon began providing first aid for rugby games on The Flat and later affiliated with the St John’s Ambulance Brigade).<sup>13</sup>

If accidents worried the men they paid little attention to safety or working conditions generally. Most shops were unheated and poorly ventilated. The pits in the erecting shop often had water lying in them but the men who worked in them—the elite fitters—never complained. Even when interviewed years later they never thought such conditions worthy of comment.<sup>14</sup> Because of inadequate accommodation many tradesmen worked outside, even on the coldest winter days. None of this occasioned complaint until 1905, when the workshops’ manager, aware that Addington had better accommodation, complained that the forgermen needed shelter. In the 1890s, indeed, the only issue to excite the men was the fact that the timekeeper’s lodge was situated at the northern end of the complex, thus disadvantaging those from Caversham township. Over 100 men petitioned for it to be moved to a more central position. The permanent men, the only ones allowed a say, voted 63–51 in favour and the department agreed. By 1910 attitudes had begun to change. In 1913 the union took up the issue of heating with the department. E. E. Gillion, the local manager, sympathised with the men but pointed out that conditions were ‘no worse than they have been for the past thirty years’. The department rejected the request and it took another thirteen years to solve the problem. Inadequate drainage worried the men even less and only in 1918 did the department note that the erecting pits usually had water lying in them.<sup>15</sup> It may be that the men

viewed such hardships as gender-appropriate, especially in a period when women were entering the workforce in unprecedented numbers; more likely the conditions did not threaten their self-respect. Visitors from other countries considered the shops ‘indescribably filthy ...’.<sup>16</sup>

Sickness must have been endemic during winter and as early as 1882 the men formed the Hillside Sick Benefit Society. This organisation provided assistance to men laid off because of sickness and recruited from all crafts and shops. Its origins remain unclear although most of the major workshops in New Zealand boasted similar societies by the 1890s.<sup>17</sup> About 60 per cent of the workforce belonged at any one time. Until about 1911, it seems, the society ran its accounts on an annual basis and ‘divvied’ up the surplus among the members at the end of the year; thereafter it appears to have accumulated funds, but they grew so slowly that the suspicion remains that the old custom died hard.<sup>18</sup> The society rarely paid up for accidents, but the men invariably organised a subscription list for the victims and their families (even after Workman’s Compensation became available). During World War I the men debated establishing a Benevolent Society to formalise assistance to the victims of accidents but finally decided against it, largely because they did not want yet another society reliant on fixed subscriptions and empowered to impose levies.<sup>19</sup> Given the number of friendly societies in the area, the strength of the Sick Benefit Society and the frequent use of subscriptions illustrates the vitality of mutualism.

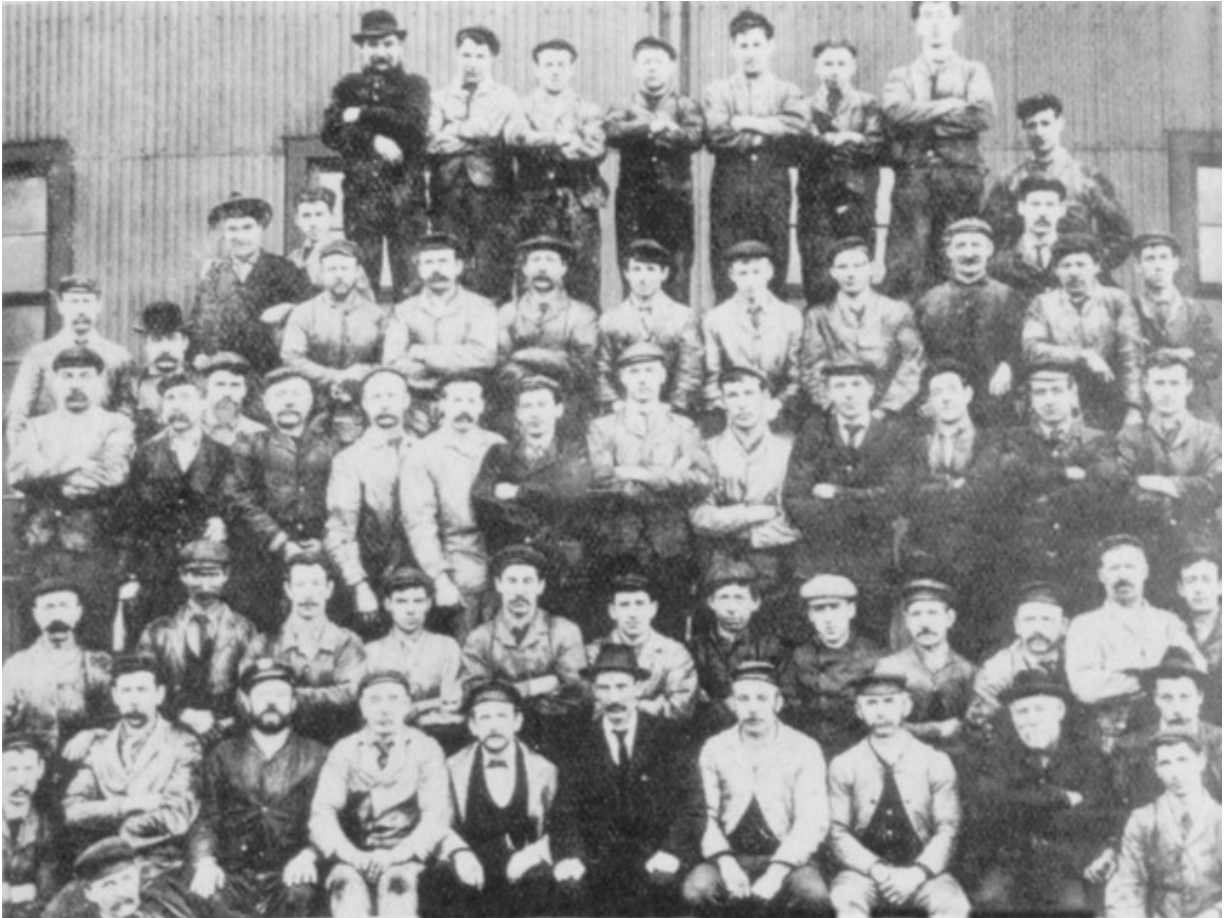
The union represented the principal expression of mutualism and a bulwark against sectionalism. An Ironworkers’ Association existed at Hillside in the 1880s but spent most of its energies demanding that locomotives and rolling stock be manufactured in the colony. In 1886 a small group of Auckland engine-drivers formed the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS) and claimed jurisdiction over the workshops on the mistaken grounds that the British society already enjoyed a similar jurisdiction. Nobody contested this and few doubtless cared until November 1889, when the new railway commissioners tried to introduce piece rates and eliminate pension and retirement allowances. The ASRS opposed and the membership grew from ninety-four to 3,183 in three months (the Dunedin men formed their branch in March 1890). The commissioners backed off when the men voted in favour of ‘extreme measures’ (the result

in Dunedin being 586–16). Although the ASRS proved to be a broken reed during the maritime strike, the railway workers obtained considerable political influence in the 1890 election (especially in Dunedin and Christchurch). Within days of the results being known the national executive, based in Christchurch, appointed seven of the Liberal–Labour MHRs to be their new national executive and constituted itself an advisory committee. The new executive took up the cudgels on behalf of the defeated men.<sup>20</sup> Twelve Liberal MHRs attended the union’s 1892 conference and joined with the ASRS in opposing the commissioners’ plan to impose compulsory insurance. Richard Seddon, a fitter who had worked in the Melbourne railway workshops before migrating to the goldfields on the West Coast, and now the Minister of Public Works, told that conference that ‘so long as the Railway Commissioners maintain their present hostile attitude toward unionism, so long will their employees have ground for complaint’.<sup>21</sup> In 1894 Seddon, now the Premier, established a Board of Appeals for all railway employees, long a demand of the ASRS, which allowed the men to limit the power of foremen and supervisors.<sup>22</sup> In the same year he also abolished the commissioners and appointed one of them, T. Ronayne, as general manager. Ronayne had served his apprenticeship in the railways and promptly recognised the ASRS on certain conditions.<sup>23</sup>

## II

The institution of a new system of classification for all railway employees constituted the most significant Liberal reform and allowed the skilled men of the workshops to institutionalise their control over the labour process. The idea of the independent craftsman, central to the handicraft trades, had been transposed into British engineering workshops during the first industrial revolution. The Classification Act (1896) reasserted the autonomy of these industrial craftsmen on the eve of the second industrial revolution (as gas, electricity, and petroleum products supplanted steam). The new law divided railway employees into two divisions: white collar (Division I) and blue collar (Division II); subdivided the second division into three categories: traffic, locomotive (workshops), and maintenance; and further subdivided all skilled men into first-class and second-class tradesmen.<sup>24</sup>

The Classification Act also specified the various trades within the workshops and by implication defined the work that each would do. Fitters, turners, boilermakers and blacksmiths,



*The fitters and the boilermakers, both outside their own shops. The serried ranks of the skilled men, their helpers and labourers give a vivid sense of how large the Hillside workshops had become by 1903.*



*Foremen and managers can be identified by their ties and jackets (although the boilermakers appear to have come dressed for the occasion). Hocken Library.*

listed in that order, received statutory recognition. The Act froze trades as they were and made craft jurisdiction integral to the management of the system and the labour process. It also made seniority integral by providing a series of steps, linked to pay rates specified in the Act, between apprentices and leading tradesmen. Experience brought promotion. Indeed the prospect of promotion lay at the heart of the system and embodied the Victorian ethos. Skilled labourers—strikers, holders-up, machinists, helpers—were second-class citizens.<sup>25</sup>

In enacting the Classification Act the government removed control over hiring, promotion, discipline and dismissal from local officials and foremen. Their arbitrary actions had been a major grievance for railway employees, as was the case in all English-speaking countries. ‘Some officers went to the extreme and inflicted severe penalties, which, in many cases, were not justifiable and were out of all proportion to the offence committed. Others again took an extremely lenient view, and passed over in the lightest manner grave breaches of the regulations ....’<sup>26</sup> Ministers also defended the

new system as a response to ‘the great anxiety evinced by the Civil servants of the colony ... to ... look forward to ... promotion as a right, and not as a favor at the sweet will of a superior officer, an Under-Secretary a Minister, or a Government’.<sup>27</sup> Railway workers also wanted to end favouritism and insecurity by instituting a system which would remove arbitrary power from supervisors and base decisions about hiring, promotion and dismissal primarily on seniority. This coincided with the department’s concern to establish uniformity.<sup>28</sup> In the United States, ironically, the foreman’s power came under attack in this period but not from workers so much as employers and engineers who had identified the autonomous foreman as an obstacle to translating investments in new technologies into higher productivity.<sup>29</sup>

The government not only introduced classification in response to employee pressure, but consulted extensively with the union.<sup>30</sup> The ASRS had more influence on government, however, than it did in the workshops. The skilled men in the workshops were not represented on the executive and the final measure did not embody all traditional craft goals. For instance, it established graduated pay scales within two broad bands, one for first-class and the other for second-class tradesmen, thus violating the craft-union goal of one rate for all skilled men. ‘Plain Bill’ Earnshaw, a brass-finisher from Hillside and now the MHR for much of The Flat, opposed the measure at every step, singling out in particular the abolition of the standard rate and insisting that the Department of Railways hire only first-grade tradesmen. Arthur Morrison, the MHR for Caversham, attacked Earnshaw, pointing out that it would be impossible to hire only first-grade tradesmen, especially given ‘the pressure that is brought to bear on us to find billets ...’, and adding that the men now received a wide range of perks. The Opposition tried to capitalise on the disunity within the ‘labour party’ by criticising the introduction of a new grade of ‘improver’ for those who had finished their apprenticeship but had been classified as second-grade tradesmen.<sup>31</sup> In other countries, however, ‘improvers’ were being recruited from the ranks of the unskilled; here they had to have served an apprenticeship. Classification translated the trades, and apprenticeship as the only means of entry, into law.<sup>32</sup>

There is little evidence that the principle of graduated pay scales upset

most skilled men, at least until 1897 when many took umbrage at their lowly classification. The storm soon died, however, because the graduated pay scale within each craft allowed for regular increments based on length of experience and linked promotion to seniority. Seniority, in turn, acknowledged that the men had a form of property right in their jobs, an appreciating asset (which reflected the view that a workman's labour was his capital). Most skilled men happily swapped the standard rate of pay for seniority. Only through seniority could men become eligible for promotion to the supervisory positions of 'leading hand' and foreman. More to the point, 'If you could get into Hillside, there was security, it was a permanent job'.<sup>33</sup> The new system could also be justified in terms of Fabian socialist ideology—as W. P. Reeves showed—and this may have carried more weight than traditional craft goals with skilled craftsmen who believed that the Liberals were creating the most just and progressive society in the world. An equally impressive consensus existed in 1901 when the government, again after long discussions with the ASRS, provided superannuation for all permanent employees of the Railways Department.<sup>34</sup> Seniority, apprentice-based crafts and the substitution of centralised bureaucratic procedures for the arbitrary power of foremen and local managers all consolidated the skilled workers' control of the labour process. These gains, together with security in old age, were more important to railway workers than the traditional craft objective of the standard rate.

### III

Hillside took on apprentices in sixteen skilled trades, most of them as fitters, turners, boilermakers and blacksmiths. Tinsmiths and coppersmiths were less numerous. Throughout this period most boys wanted to become fitters, not because of any pay advantage but because the all-round training opened up a wide variety of opportunities as engineers. At Hillside they also monopolised most supervisory positions.<sup>35</sup> Regardless of which trade they entered, apprentices did not work under the supervision of a tradesman, unlike the various assistants, but were directly responsible to the foreman. He assigned them the simplest craft tasks first and then brought them on to the more complex work. Apprentices had to have passed

Standard Four and be in their fifteenth year, so that they would be out of their time by the age of twenty-one, but there was no formal educational component to apprenticeship until 1926. They also had to pass a medical examination and present two testimonials from well-known people (a testimonial from a pro-government MHR carried considerable weight).<sup>36</sup> The workshops provided a sound general training in the various craft skills. Apprenticeship also provided an intense introduction to the culture of the craft and to the larger workshop culture. Apprentices spent their working days in their own shop and boys who did their time together often became close friends. Boys from the smaller trades often mixed socially but those in the larger ones were more clannish, at least until the 1920s when the workshops fielded an Apprentices' rugby team. As David Fenby said, 'You go through life remembering your apprentice mates'.<sup>37</sup> There were also apprentice patternmakers, carpenters and painters. When out of their time the department reviewed and classified them as first-or second-grade tradesmen. First-class tradesmen entered the permanent staff and joined the superannuation scheme, their years as apprentices counting towards seniority; if second-grade they could only become casuals and it took a substantial promotion for them to become permanent. Until 1920 apprentices had to be out of their time before they could join the union.

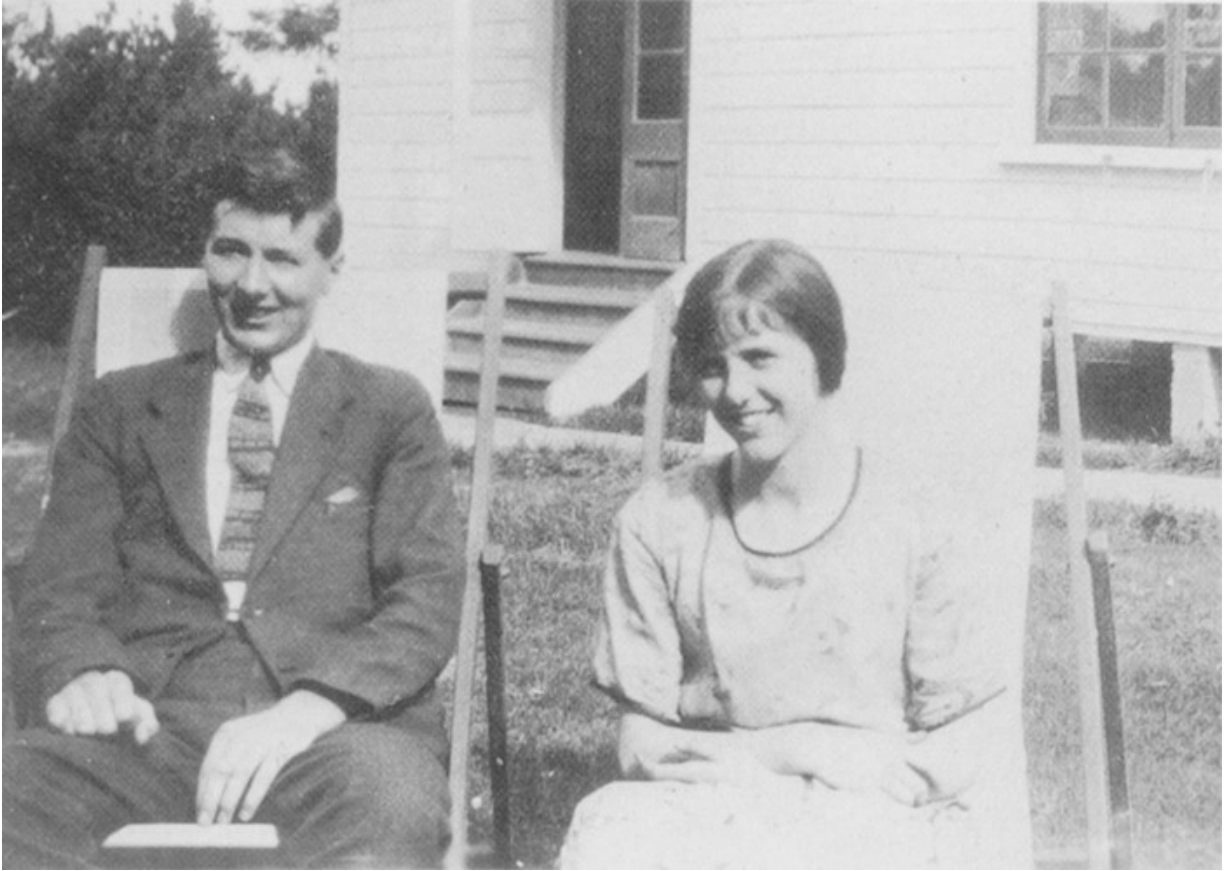
In the 1890s apprentices classified as first class after five years of training became members of the permanent staff at the bottom of the pay scale for first-grade tradesmen. Promotion became their major preoccupation. Only apprentices classified first class could hope to obtain enough seniority to become a leading hand or a foreman. Management assumed that this should happen reasonably easily and during the war complained that 'very few of these [231 apprentices] have any hope of occupying the position of even a Foreman'.<sup>38</sup> Those classified second class could be taken on as casuals but had to serve a three-year term as improvers and could not join the superannuation scheme. Promotion from second-class to first-class tradesmen caused many problems, for the successful applicant could never hope to become a leading hand nor could he could join the superannuation scheme after the age of thirty-four.<sup>39</sup> Besides, not surprisingly, many men felt slighted by second-grade status. A committee from head office dealt with each application, the foreman or leading hand

playing a major role, but unsuccessful applicants could take their cases to the Appeal Board. From 1908 onwards, as the department struggled to contain labour costs and earn 5 per cent on its capital investment, it began placing first-class apprentices at the bottom of the pay scale for second-grade tradesmen and then instituted a new step in the ladder known as probationer. The men became very annoyed and the ASRS took up the issue. To inflame the situation further, the Minister began vetoing Appeal Board decisions.<sup>40</sup>

Most disputes over promotion arose, however, from the tension between two criteria for promotion: seniority and competence. As one Minister of Railways put it:

On the one hand, I find some of the most promising and energetic members urging their claims to promotion and increased pay on the ground of superior ability and skill; on the other hand, members with longer service, but with less pronounced originality, contending for an equal share of promotion or increased pay. Whilst securing equal opportunities for promotion to all members, it is a question for future consideration whether merit and ability are adequately rewarded under such a system, and whether in the process of time the public railway service may not suffer in the event of such qualities not receiving sufficient stimulation.<sup>41</sup>

Many able skilled men, passed over because they lacked seniority, doubtless agreed. The most frustrated probably resigned, leaving behind those who prized security above opportunity.<sup>42</sup> In 1898 the government consulted the ASRS and the Railway Officers' Institute (the organisation of Division I, which split from the ASRS in 1896) in an effort to solve the problem. Agreement proved to be unattainable. In 1900 the government issued its own regulations, but seniority remained the key to promotion unless there was clear evidence of incompetence. In 1923 the ASRS brought a case before the Supreme Court to test the general manager's power to ignore seniority when making promotions, something he began doing with increasing frequency in order to assert the importance of merit. The Chief Justice ruled against the union, but the custom proved stronger than the Court. Little appears to have changed. The general manager may also have begun counting the cost of ignoring seniority, especially when the union announced that it would take the issue to Parliament.<sup>43</sup>



*David and Rua Fenby, his sister, outside the Pleasant Valley Sanatorium in 1926. Tuberculosis had interrupted his apprenticeship. He survived, later married and remained in the Railways and the Hillside workshops for the rest of his life, although he ended his career running the school for apprentices.*

Seniority and non-portable superannuation persuaded many railway workers to make their jobs lifelong commitments. The government's commitment to maintain this skilled workforce by providing regular employment also helped to ensure the stability of the workforce.<sup>44</sup> Although skilled men could often earn a higher hourly rate outside the workshops, no other industry offered regular employment throughout the year. One analysis of the permanent skilled metal workers at Hillside found that the average length of service was fifteen years in 1900 and eighteen years and four months in 1920. If they were, on average, half way through their working lives at this point, on retirement the average Hillside worker would have worked for the railways between thirty and thirty-six years. Of the 104 permanent skilled metal workers at Hillside in 1902, in 1911 it proved impossible to trace 16.3 per cent, 2.9 per cent had died, 8.7 per cent had been transferred elsewhere in New Zealand, 65.4 per cent still lived on

The Flat and 6.7 per cent lived elsewhere in Dunedin. Even in 1922, when almost 31 per cent of the 104 men could not be traced with certainty, 41.4 per cent still lived in Dunedin and worked at Hillside.<sup>45</sup> Table 6.1, based on the annual reports of the Sick Benefit Society, confirms this picture of stability. Nor was there any variation between casual and permanent men. The prospect of steady and regular work clearly appealed to many. Nor was New Zealand unique.<sup>46</sup> Many at Hillside had also followed their fathers into the railways. David Fenby was not unusual: ‘My father worked on the railway. My grandfather [a guard] was killed on the railway. So more or less we were a railway family.’<sup>47</sup> During the war and immediate post-war years, however, a high proportion of men left the service.

**TABLE 6.1**  
**Departures from the Benefit Society\***

	1908	1911	1916	1919	1921
died	3	1	1	9	1
retired	5	7	2	4	-
left the Society	3	4	12	6	27
transferred	5	4	11	12	11
resigned	9	2	36**	10**	27
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>279</b>

\* RR, Feb. 1908, p. 9; 10 Feb. 1911, p. 65; 8 Feb. 1916, p. 60; 9 Feb. 1919, p. 57.

\*\* Most of these resigned on joining the NZEF.

Dismissals and layoffs were also unusual. Unless laying off apprentices just out of their time, the workshop manager could not lay off any staff without permission from Wellington.<sup>48</sup> It might be thought that casuals would be most vulnerable, but there is no evidence of that except in the case of term casuals, men taken on for a limited time in busy periods. Even

laying off term casuals could prove politically explosive, because the local MHR would soon be hammering on the Minister's door and at least one daily newspaper fulminating about injustice.<sup>49</sup> According to some interviews, even in cases of known incompetence, dismissals were unusual. Only one man recalled a dismissal for incompetence and added that the foreman was renowned for meanness. Incompetence was never total, however, so that jobs could be found for less capable tradesmen. One ex-foreman looked shocked at the idea that incompetence might bring dismissal.<sup>50</sup> Of course, in the workshops most of the so-called 'unskilled' were skilled helpers. Even the dismissal of a permanent labourer for incompetence was time-consuming and complex. In the case of Robert Millar at Hillside, for instance, the local manager, several foremen, and two labourers gave evidence for the department, while Millar called nine witnesses of his own, all skilled. As a rule, the skilled men believed that incompetence was to be found among labourers on the maintenance and way staff. Millar's claim that he 'simply wanted what was a fair thing, and what was due to him, and that was a chance to earn a living', also struck a responsive chord among skilled men.<sup>51</sup>

The growing consensus about their entitlement to work, a consensus which The Flat largely shared by 1914, reflected the government's belief that railways were 'adjuncts to the settlement of the country' and the department's determination to retain its skilled workforce by guaranteeing work throughout the year. This was paralleled by a strong movement towards core rates of payment and small relativities. The Liberal Government's commitment to reducing the skilled/unskilled differential and the department's resolve to hold labour costs contributed to the emergence of a flat pay structure. By 1909, for instance, first-grade tradesmen received between 10s and 10/6d a day, second-grade men received between 9/6d and 10s, while the 'unskilled' got 9s a day. Leading hands, by contrast, earned between 11s and 12/6d a day. Casuals were not disadvantaged (except that they could not aspire to the relatively lucrative positions of leading hand or foreman). At Hillside, in 1913, fifty-five of ninety casuals were in grade one (and at Addington the proportion was higher).<sup>52</sup> The Liberal Government created long-term problems, however, by continually lifting the pay rates for the least skilled and eroding relativities. In 1908 the

government introduced a minimum annual wage for permanent staff of £100 for single men older than twenty-two and £130 for married men and widowers. In 1912 a 'living wage' of nine shillings a day was extended to all men in Division II.<sup>53</sup> The workshops thus not only institutionalised regular employment but eroded the pay differential between skilled and unskilled.

The skilled men at Hillside appear to have supported the move towards core rates and reduced skilled/unskilled relativities (so long as some differential existed), although they may have accepted this as the price for retaining control of the labour process and containing dilution. Be that as it may, in 1915–16 the Hillside branch of the ASRS urged the abolition of the existing apprenticeship system. All boys, the branch decided, should start on the same grade, be paid a 'living wage', and advance according to their qualifications. Apprentices, they said, no longer learnt a trade, the system favoured the well-off (as parents had to support them for five or seven years), and the absence of formal instruction and examinations meant that the apprentice 'merely had to complete his time'. Hillside proposed that all boys be taken on as junior labourers and, after a year, spend three months in each shop before choosing a trade, studying it for a year and then passing an examination in the relevant theory before proceeding to further training.<sup>54</sup> The ASRS and the wider labour movement took up the issue in 1917–18. Simultaneously, technical colleges demanded that the Railways Department recognise the importance of formal training. The government finally addressed the question in 1922–23 but backed off such a radical change.<sup>55</sup> Equality both beckoned and legitimised.

The roots of this consensus within the workshops about a flat wage structure and the importance of steady work did not separate the workers from management any more than it divided the men from the community. The pattern of recruiting all but the highest management personnel from the shop floor strengthened the consensus (just as it reinforced the consensus about apprentice-based crafts, seniority and skilled workers' control of the labour process). Under the authority of the locomotive engineer, based in Wellington, there was a workshop manager. At Hillside, until the 1980s, he was always an ex-fitter.<sup>56</sup> Under him there were foremen in charge of each branch, also promoted from the shop floor: a foreman blacksmith, foreman

boilermaker, foreman carpenter, foreman fitter and the like. Under these foremen were leading hands (later known as sub-foremen). Foremen supervising an entire shop typically spent about three hours a day in their offices doing paperwork and left it to their leading hands to provide close supervision of workers.<sup>57</sup> As a rule, foremen did not mix socially with the men and the few surviving photographs suggest that they often wore a three-piece suit to work (if only to be photographed). Robert Rutherford (Peter's grandson) recalled that 'The boss was Mister, but the leading hand was Alf or Bill .... They all came ... up through the ranks.' Foremen usually left the ASRS for the Officers' Institute on promotion, but before the war, at Hillside anyway, strong unionists did not resign when promoted. In 1907–8 a small ginger group of men who belonged to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers tried to have all foremen excluded from the ASRS, but even as late as 1918 the workshop manager, John Carson, belonged to the union and represented the Hillside branch at the national conference.<sup>58</sup> By and large they also continued living in the same streets as their employees (although promotions often coincided with transfers).

The bonding that occurred during apprenticeship and in between twenty and thirty-five years on the shop floor did not cease with promotion; recruiting men from the shop floor meant that supervisory personnel had been socialised into the customs of the craft and the culture of the workshops. When mates became foremen or foremen retired the men usually farewelled them in style and made handsome presentations. If unpopular, however, the foreman could expect little quarter. Rutherford recalled one unpopular foreman falling down the pit and breaking his leg: 'the gang all cheered and nobody would go and pick him up'.<sup>59</sup> The department placed no pressure on foremen to become instruments of management and the difficulty of obtaining promotion from Division II to Division I meant that few skilled men ever joined management.<sup>60</sup> Shop culture, powerful even in the United States, was almost unchallenged in New Zealand.<sup>61</sup>



*Albert Percy Godber, a brass turner by trade, spent most of his working life in the Petone workshops. In 1925 he was promoted and transferred to Hillside, becoming foreman of the machine shop and buying a house on Baker Street. A keen and talented photographer, he had a passion for trains and locomotives, and for Maori design. He stands on the left, by a lathe. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

## IV

Not only were all supervisory personnel recruited from the shop floor but their power was limited by the larger bureaucratic system of classification. They could neither hire nor fire, promote nor demote. Head office kept a close eye on hiring, firing was rare and required the general manager's approval, while a board from head office, including local supervisory personnel, annually assessed each worker's claim to a pay increase or promotion. The results were published in the D-3 list. Workers dissatisfied with any decision had the right to appeal. Pimley recalled that 'People used it good and plenty'.<sup>62</sup> The union's journal, *Railway Review*, provided full and critical reports of Appeal Board decisions and most of the testimony. Supervisory personnel were subject to the same processes. In 1908, for instance, the shops doubtless buzzed when the workshops manager appealed against the department's refusal to promote him. He lost (but obtained a transfer the following year).<sup>63</sup> Although impotent by comparison

with his counterparts in other countries, the foreman could insist that men worked overtime, monitor their time of arrival and departure, suspend them for a limited time, impose small fines and police such regulations as the ban on smoking in the shops.<sup>64</sup> Foremen could also issue 'Please Explain' notes to workers for any offence, but if the explanation was not satisfactory they could only refer the case to the workshop manager who in turn had to refer it to the general manager. 'The view taken by the Head Office is that no members of the service should be punished unless the offence with which he is charged is proven.' By 1914, it seems, foremen issued 'Please Explain' notes only to apprentices.<sup>65</sup>

Both the men and the foremen were more impressed by the power that existed than by the comparative weakness of authority, and the union campaigned to limit any discretionary authority they enjoyed.<sup>66</sup> The issue came to a head in 1909 when a Legislative Councillor, an ex-boilermaker from Addington, complained that the foremen's lack of authority had made laziness, loafing and idleness endemic at the Addington Workshops. The government appointed two engineers and an academic to investigate. The men from the workshops, regardless of rank, presented a united front. A foreman fitter testified: 'I have no difficulty in maintaining discipline. On one occasion three men refused overtime work; one went back after being spoken to; the other two, after inquiry, were dismissed.'<sup>67</sup>

The foreman's inability to fire and hire, the fact that he had to justify all recommendations on discipline and promotion, ensured that the issue of authority on the shop floor never became explosive. Instead grievances focused on the general manager's office in Wellington, especially when head office tried to reduce costs or increase productivity by tightening discipline (as happened in 1908–12).<sup>68</sup> The Addington inquiry's criticism of management only strengthened the powerful consensus that the men with experience on the shop floor knew best what jobs needed doing, how quickly they could be done and what tools and materials were needed. 'Ministerial Autocracy', especially when the Minister used his veto to overturn Appeal Board decisions, aroused almost unanimous hostility from the shop floor and the service generally. Tensions within the shops, in short, were generally projected towards Wellington.

## V

Perhaps nothing demonstrates more clearly the power of these autonomous industrial craftsmen than their success in resisting ‘dilution’ of their crafts. One blacksmith at Addington, who had worked at the Pittsburgh Locomotive Works in America and had investigated blacksmithing in England and Germany for that company, noted that: ‘I have seen shops where the division of labour was much keener than at Addington Workshops’.<sup>69</sup> Robert Rutherford (the son of Peter the grocer), who was taken on at Hillside as an apprentice boilermaker in 1915, made the same point. Immigrants from the Clyde, heartland of the British ship-building industry, were much more specialised than their New Zealand-trained counterparts. They might know how to weld or rivet, but not both. The New Zealand boilermakers and fitters could invariably do both, and much more besides.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, in American shops, by 1905 the apprenticeship system had begun to collapse as new technologies allowed increasing subdivision of tasks and the substitution of unskilled assistants. It was much the same in Britain, although ‘dilution’ was less common in railway workshops. The division of labour and the dilution of skill were simply less advanced than they were in Britain or the United States, and remained less advanced in part because of the unanimous conviction of all men in the workshop.

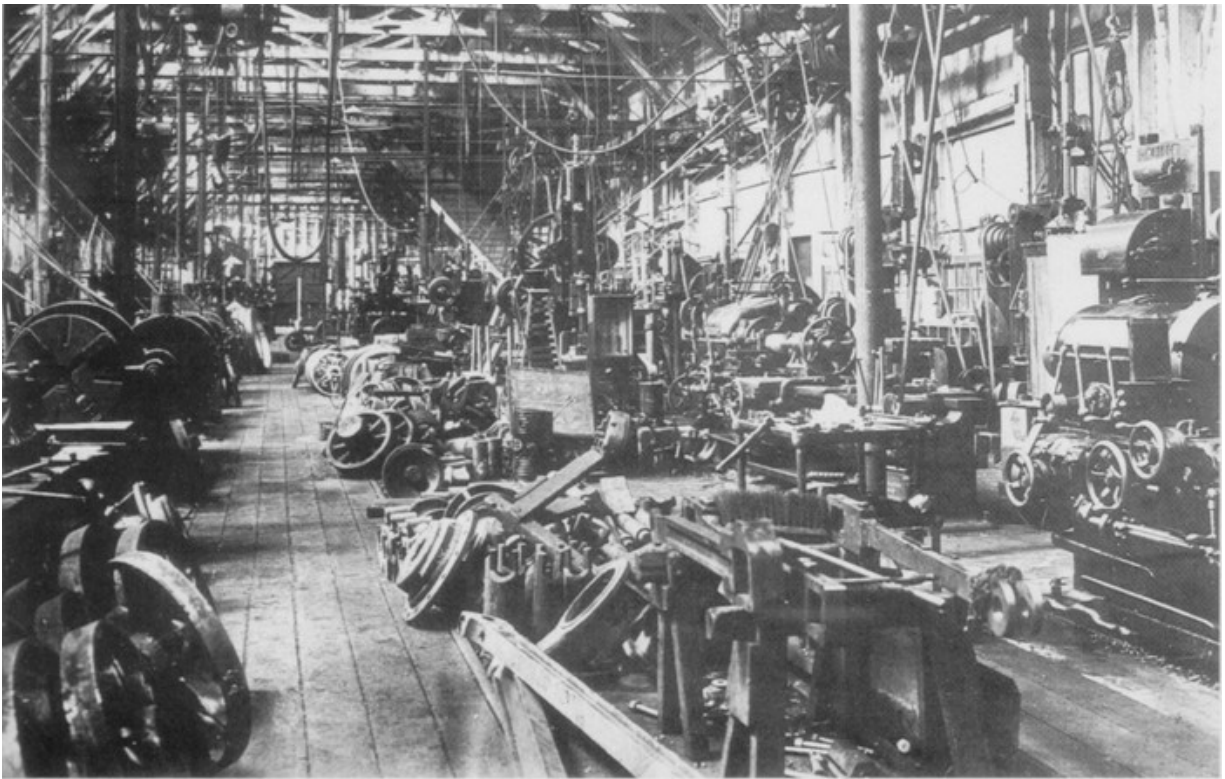
It was not only that the skilled men successfully established control over new technologies and resisted the subdivision of crafts into less skilled specialities. Other factors were important. New machines that produced large runs of standardised parts could contribute little to repair work. Locomotive construction, which might have used such technology, remained only part of the work at Hillside, and the New Zealand market for locomotives was tiny. Besides, the types of engineering in which standardisation and mass production occurred—electrical, armaments, bicycles, sewing machines—scarcely existed in New Zealand. Yet the technological revolution in engineering that occurred between 1800 and 1850 had brought large numbers of ‘unskilled’ workers into the workshops. In many crafts the introduction of new machines made it possible for employers to substitute unskilled for skilled labour. Only the solidarity of the craft structure prevented the helpers from taking over such work,

although the small skilled-unskilled wage differential in New Zealand—much smaller than in Britain or North America—meant that employers had less incentive for promoting assistants.<sup>71</sup>

Skilled metal workers may have accepted the narrowing pay differentials as the price of maintaining control over the labour process. They certainly maintained their insistence that all tradesmen had to have served apprenticeships, and often demanded the indenture document as proof. The unskilled—as far as the records reveal—acquiesced in their exclusion from the trades and their subordination within the labour process (although Pimley claimed that the fitter ‘wouldn’t give them orders; he’d ask them to do things. Say, would you ...?’). Occasionally someone complained, as in 1908 when ‘Progress’ wrote that ‘a machinist, no matter how smart he is, cannot rise to be an improver, turner or fitter’.<sup>72</sup> The issue blew up at Hillside in 1910 when Peter Ireland, who had been hired as a first-grade tradesman in 1900, was demoted because he had not served an apprenticeship.<sup>73</sup> By and large, however, the ‘unskilled’ became more conscious of their sectional interests, especially as the tradesmen became more organised in pursuit of their goals. In 1912, for instance, the strikers and holders-up complained that they deserved a ‘living wage’, ten shillings a day, because they did ‘the roughest and most arduous work’ and were ‘skilled men in the highest sense of the word’.<sup>74</sup>

New machines, by subdividing tasks into simpler processes, certainly created the opportunity for ‘unskilled’ assistants to challenge the tradesmen for control of some jobs. The turners faced the most serious threat from dilution before World War I. Due to the invention of turret lathes and capstan lathes, and to a lesser extent grinders, radial drills and vertical borers, machinists supplanted the turner in Canada and the United States. This second revolution in tools, which occurred in the 1890s, had little impact at Hillside, where the old centre lathe, also considerably improved in this period, remained in use until after the war. Whereas the war hurled British engineering into the twentieth century, New Zealand’s workshops were frozen. According to Rutherford, only with the arrival of German lathes—part of reparations—was the new technology introduced. The first grinder was not installed at Hillside until 1924.<sup>75</sup> Throughout the period, however, the number of men classified as machinists continued to expand.

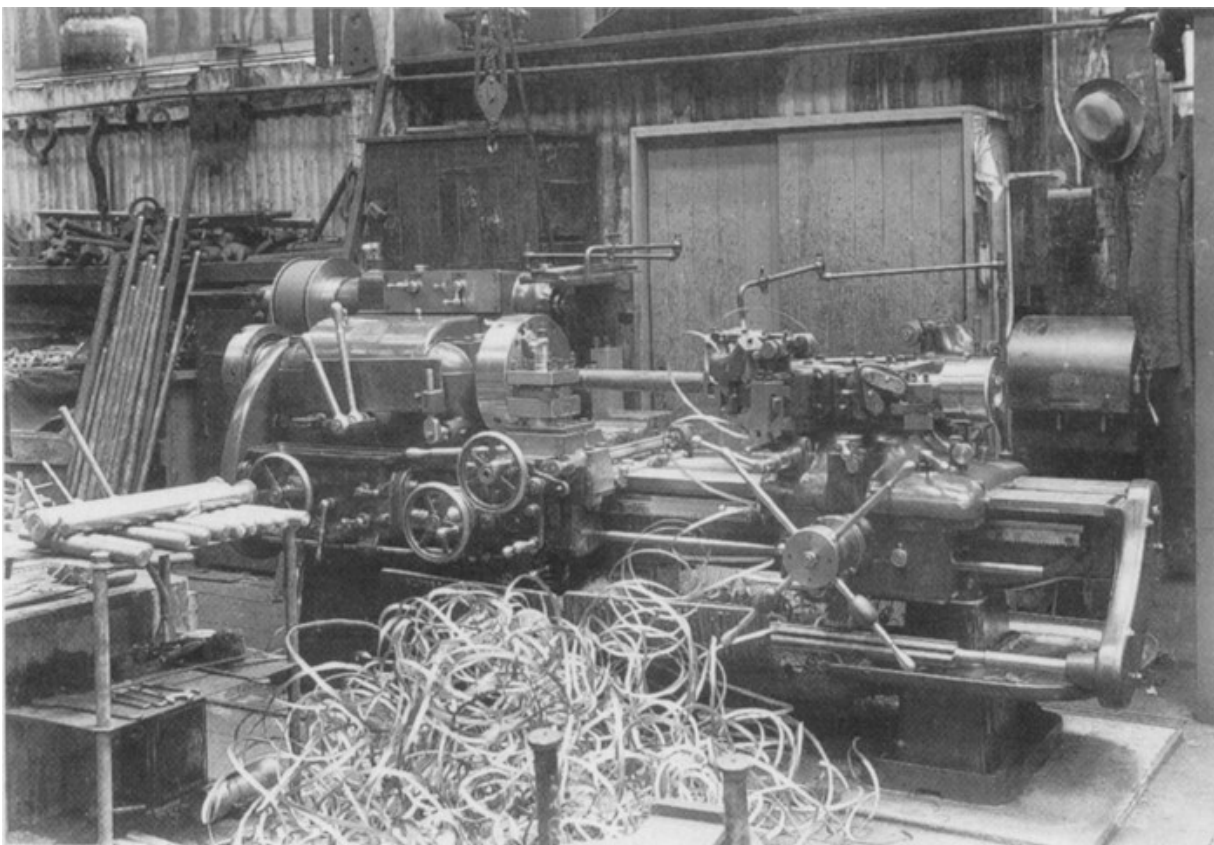
In 1920, following an inquiry, the department agreed to classify iron-working machinists into two grades. The union then began pushing to extend the new system to grinders and planers and succeeded in 1922. The turners retained the most skilled jobs, however, although apprentice fitters still received training as turners, and fitters continued to monopolise supervisory positions in the machine shop.<sup>76</sup>



*The south-west end of the machine shop, 1925. Although the muddle probably helped to strengthen the skilled turner's control of the shop floor, for only those with an intimate knowledge of the workshop could find anything, new machines, together with the fact that a growing proportion of the turner's time was spent on simpler tasks, made it possible for semi-skilled men to challenge for control of the job. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

The workers' success in resisting the consequences of the second industrial revolution meant that the department made no attempt to introduce incentive wage systems (the commissioners' attempt to introduce piece rates had been yet another nail in their coffin). Yet, in America, new forms of the piece rate became very popular with employers because they promised to translate increased investment in technology into increased productivity. 'Piecework was not merely "payment by results"; it was predominantly a new concept of the job.' If accompanied by appropriate

investment in new managerial structures it 'transferred many decisions, based on skilled judgment, from the individual craftsman to the industrial engineer'. In the process tradesmen lost control of the labour process and the amount of effort they expended. After defeating the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in 1897, British employers also began to introduce piece rates, but the men on the shop floor clawed back control over the labour process.<sup>77</sup> Although this form of payment best suited factories employing mass-production methods, where employers had control over hiring, the members of the Addington inquiry showed an interest in the issue. The Pittsburgh blacksmith, who had worked under both systems, had no doubt the workshops in New Zealand 'do as well' as similar shops in the United States. He commented on the 'remarkable harmony and peace' and claimed that discipline was better. 'What is the ratio in energy exhibited at Addington as compared with American piecework shops?' 'They are not in it', he replied.<sup>78</sup> Robert McEwan, a turner at Addington (who had worked in the Clyde shipyards), agreed that the bonus system resulted in 'an increased output'. 'Have you formed any opinion as to whether the turners here are good men?' 'They compare every bit with the Clyde men. I may say with all truthfulness that the quality of work on the Clyde is falling very rapidly. It is becoming poorer every day as a result of the bonus system.'<sup>79</sup>

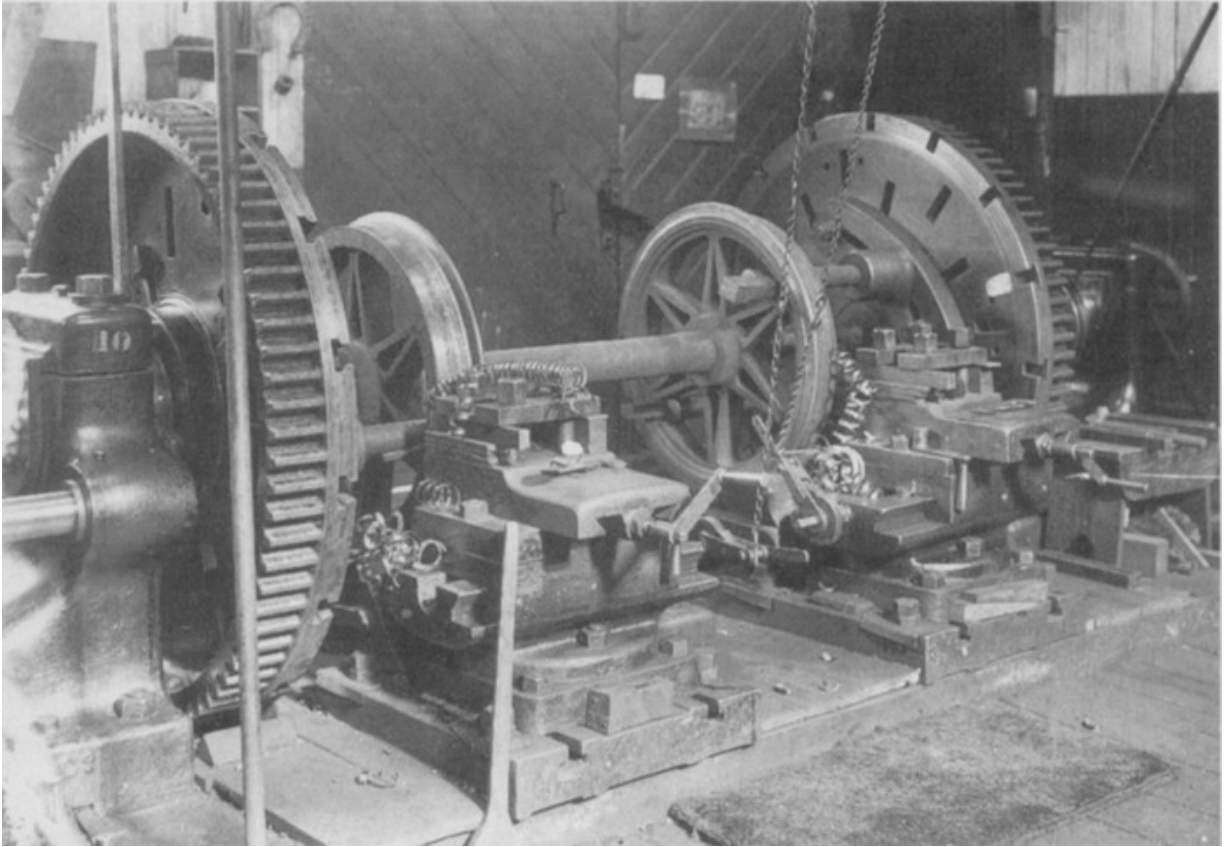


*Capstan lathe in the machine shop. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

The Addington inquiry drove the skilled men and head office into an alliance to defend the status quo.<sup>80</sup> The inquiry could not determine whether workers practised ‘government stroke’ (‘a peculiar form of disease which ... [imparts] to its victim an uncontrollable desire to lean-up against the nearest post’).<sup>81</sup> As Frederick Winslow Taylor was arguing at about this time, management had no way of knowing, let alone controlling, the pace of work until it took control of the work process away from the skilled workers and established its own evaluation of necessary labour time by its own time-study methods.<sup>82</sup> Taylor’s ideas had become very popular among employers and professional engineers in the United States and Canada but they had little influence in New Zealand. Some in the private sector spoke of superior ‘American methods’, but the Arbitration Court had to be persuaded.<sup>83</sup> Taylor’s technological innovations were widely adopted, however. Pneumatic drills were introduced at Hillside in 1904 and high-speed steel tools in 1905. In 1912 the overhead cranes at Hillside were electrified and new electric motors were introduced for powering highspeed

steel tools.<sup>84</sup> Despite the introduction of some new technologies, the men continued to pace the work by customary methods. A witness at the Addington inquiry said: 'In a boiler shop the nature of the work is such that the men are bound to stand still at times, and by an outsider it might be thought that those men were idling their time, but to a man who is acquainted with the character of that work that would not so appear. At such times the men would have time to chat.'<sup>85</sup> It was the same with the fitters, turners and blacksmiths. They knew how much time they needed for each task.

Management had no method for controlling the production flow. The tradesmen entered their time each day in their own individual time books, which the foreman later checked and initialled. The checking might occur only once a fortnight, however, after which the books would be sent to the timekeeper and his clerks. After this check they were sent to head office in Wellington. One apprentice boilermaker recalled with a chuckle how they would try to throw the clerks into confusion by entering details of jobs they could not possibly have done. By 1911 these records were widely considered completely unreliable.<sup>86</sup> No separate record was kept of the time taken on particular parts of an operation, nor of the time an individual took on a particular job. The Addington inquiry asked one manager if he had any way of knowing what any employee was doing; he replied 'No; to do so would involve a very elaborate system'.<sup>87</sup> The department tried occasionally to make workers record more information on their timesheets, but the men invariably sabotaged such attempts in an avalanche of detail. One reason for their resistance, although nobody ever made the point, was that the status quo allowed them to 'do foreigners' (i.e. make things for themselves, including their own tools).<sup>88</sup>



*Car and wagon wheel lathe in the machine shop, 1926. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

Although the Addington inquiry provided ‘A Complete Vindication’ for the men, the committee added, in the same sentence, that the men should be congratulated for not taking still more advantage of the ‘small amount of real power ... possessed by the workshop manager and foremen’. Classification and centralisation of decision-making had rendered managers and foremen powerless to the point where even poor workers enjoyed complete security of tenure. The workshops were disorganised, the machinery obsolete, ‘time and cost keeping ... complicated and unsatisfactory’, and outsiders too frequently interfered (a crack at the way in which the men used their local MHRs to tackle issues on which management proved unresponsive). The report also recommended the establishment of a tool room, the separation of repair work from new construction and a more ‘systematic’ approach to new work, including production scheduling and some system for tracking the time spent on all tasks. There is no record of how the men at Hillside reacted—they still had no union branch of their own—but they doubtless scoffed at the new-

fangled theories which shaped the committee's report. The indictment was so total, however, that Ronayne, the architect of classification and centralisation, vigorously defended the status quo. He dismissed the call for 'modern manufacturing practice' as inapplicable to railways. Shop culture, rooted in practical experience and centred on the autonomous industrial craftsman's control of the labour process, emerged triumphant, for the government backed off.<sup>89</sup>



*The tinsmith's shop was a haven of peace and tranquillity. The man nearest the camera appears to be repairing lanterns, presumably the Department's. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

During the prosperous 1900s the workshops became as much a centre of social life as a place of employment. In 1909 the social hall, paid for by the department, was opened and the men enthusiastically organised a succession of bazaars and concerts to buy a piano. They set aside a room for the library, established in 1885, which boasted 6,000 books and subscribed to many Journals. About half the men belonged to the library. Apart from the Sick Benefit Society and the Ambulance Division, the workshops also supported the First Railway Pioneer Volunteer Company (c. 1908), a football team, a cricket club, a debating society, a weekly card evening, and for long periods, an orchestra and a choir. There was also a Volunteer Fire

Brigade and a rifle club. Some of these clubs failed to survive the war, but they all flourished in the 1920s and the apprentices fielded teams in several sports.<sup>90</sup> Self and mutual improvement, together with entertainment, justified several of these vigorous voluntary activities, but the men also enjoyed organising contests between the shops or, better still, with other workshops. The annual rugby clash with Invercargill was always popular. Besides this dense network of voluntary activities the men rarely lost a chance to celebrate the rituals of life, especially marriages ('going into double harness'), or the rituals of life in the service, especially transfers and retirements. A smoke concert would be organised, speeches made, a handsome gift handed over and a succession of toasts drunk to the King, the craft, the shop and the union. Songs, stories and (after 1910) gramophone selections punctuated the evening.<sup>91</sup>

The annual picnic was the major social event on the workshops' calendar each year and indicates the new centrality of home among the skilled and the unskilled. Wives, 'sweethearts' and children were part of the day. In 1907, for instance, local firms donated a record number of prizes for the various contests of skill, strength and dexterity. Many contests allowed individual talent to be recognised; others, such as the egg-in-the-spoon race, affirmed equality. The "'baby show" ... always one of the chief attractions ... drew record entries'. Sidey, the local MHR, judged the 'baby show', the Caversham band performed and the day ended with a distribution of toys to the 'little folk'. The pattern rarely varied. In 1915, for instance, 700 people travelled on the SS *Waireka* to the 'Maori Kaik'. The workshops' orchestra provided 'lively items', the 'Natives' entertained the crowd with poi dances and a haka, Sidey gave out the prizes and made a speech, and everybody had a wonderful time.<sup>92</sup> If the picnic provided events which allowed for the ritual affirmation of equality, at least within each gender group, the voluntary activities and the smoke concerts also saw leading hands, foremen, tradesmen (first and second grade) and the various species of 'labourer' deal with each other as equals. Skill was central to the organisation of work, but not to social life.

Nor was skill central to the ASRS, a general-purpose union which represented everybody other than those in Division I. Hillside men played little part in the Otago branch and the most active unionists tended to

belong to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.<sup>93</sup> To some extent this probably reflected the marginal status of tradesmen within the organisation, both locally and nationally. In part, however, like the men in the handicraft sector, their workshops provided the basis for action when they had a grievance or a demand. They turned to the union only on national issues such as wages. In 1909–12, a period of national ferment which coincided with the department's attempt to reduce labour costs, the men showed signs of frustration. In 1909 a boilermaker challenged the long-serving president of the Otago branch, P. E. Nolan, signaller, without success. Nolan quickly decided that Hillside needed a representative on the local executive.<sup>94</sup> The issue flared nationally and a special conference in 1910, to which Hillside sent a delegate, reorganised the executive to ensure that each section, including the workshops, was represented.<sup>95</sup> In 1911, disgruntled by the erosion of the pay differential between second-grade tradesmen and machinists, the men at Hillside formed a Tradesmen's Committee to press their case. In 1912, furious that the ASRS had ignored their grievance, the Hillside branch of the ASRS held its first meeting. The branch boasted 269 members and 210 took part in the ballot to select an executive.<sup>96</sup>

## VI

The customary labour process survived the war, but it was not obvious that it would do so. The department brought men out of retirement, promoted some helpers to skilled positions and even hired some women as machinists in smaller centres (it agreed fully with the union that only wartime urgency justified the policy).<sup>97</sup> Difficulty in recruiting apprentices created more complex problems in the long run, but they only became apparent in 1920–21.<sup>98</sup> Although one-quarter of the men at the Hillside workshops volunteered for military service before the introduction of conscription in November 1916, the stability of the workforce and The Flat's population meant that most of the problems could be dealt with by bringing back retired tradesmen.<sup>99</sup> Shortages of skilled labour—compounded by a growing number of resignations from the service—created some opportunities for the machinists and grinders in the turners' shop. Some helpers came on to skilled work, however, and the skilled men viewed with

anxiety the possibility that what they accepted as a temporary necessity would become permanent after the war. One man later recalled that he declined the chance to work lathes at Hillside, however, 'solely on account of the ill-feeling existing between the turners and machinists'.<sup>100</sup> Despite this evidence no major problems occurred at Hillside. However, *Railway Review* monitored the most ominous developments in the country and Hillside joined its voice to the chorus of denunciation. Fear amplified the omens.<sup>101</sup> The Efficiency Board's call for women to replace men and the pressure placed on the Railways Department by the Military Service Board to let more men go did nothing to allay anxiety. To make matters worse, The Flat's inaugural meeting of the Women's National Reserve offered to replace any men who went. In 1917 'The question of sex arose [at Hillside], and the matter was not approved'. The editor of *Railway Review*, responding to the employment of women in British engineering shops, remarked that 'There is a large class of female labour in England accustomed to hard manual work ... we hope never to see the same thing in this country'.<sup>102</sup> Yet shortages of skilled labour and increased locomotive construction intensified the problem (fifty locomotives were built at Hillside in 1913–19 compared to thirty-six in 1907–12).<sup>103</sup> The return of disabled soldiers to the workshops also sharpened anxiety, especially when the department suspended minimum rates and Workman's Compensation.<sup>104</sup> Fears of dilution kept the skilled men edgy.

Despite the intense patriotism of the men in the workshops, the tradesmen preferred to offer their lives rather than sacrifice their control of the labour process. In 1915–16 the ASRS proved little more resolute than the department on the issue of dilution. The skilled men of the workshops had already become disgruntled by the union's failure to protect their wage relativities for skill, and the rapid inflation of the war years compounded this sense of grievance. In 1915 tradesmen from around the country, convinced that the Amalgamated did not properly look after their interests, formed a Railway Tradesmen's Association to push their wage demands.<sup>105</sup>

The wage movement gathered support in the major workshops. The men complained that the Society had neglected their interests and demanded that it give priority to the tradesmen's wage claim, and that all tradesmen should get at least what the engine-drivers did. They also demanded a margin for

skill of around 2/9d a day, dirt allowances, more leading hands and a reduction in the probation period between completing an apprenticeship and receiving the rate for a first-class tradesmen. Clause 13 of their manifesto went to the heart of the matter: 'That [in future] no person be allowed to do tradesmen's work who has not served an apprenticeship'. Clause 14 insisted that in future nobody should be hired as a tradesman until they had shown their 'indentures or papers'.<sup>106</sup> In May the delegates from the Tradesmen's Association, including a 'Boilermaker' from Hillside, S. Ingram (who had grown up on David Street, lived on the Main South Road and was one of F. S. Ingram's three sons), met with the executive of the Society in Wellington. They insisted that 'what we do object to is that men shall be allowed to creep in in the future. Not only that we object to Labourers doing tradesmen's work. We contend that a labourer has no right to handle a tradesman's tools.' The problem, of course, was not only that skilled men were trying to protect their jobs, but also their pay scales, for a labourer brought on to skilled work very rarely received the skilled rate (not that they were any happier if he did).



*Kensington in 1926, as seen from the north-eastern end of the workshops, running from Burns Street to Hillside Road. The King Edward Theatre (now the Mayfair) dominates. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

The general secretary, Joe Mack, was not a tradesman and resented their attempt to create a watertight monopoly. He tried to side-track the

discussion by raising the question of bridge carpenters, skilled men who did not serve apprenticeships, but the tradesmen insisted on talking about metal workers. Mack asked: 'Is not ability better than all the indentures?' The principal spokesman for the tradesmen retorted that 'A man cannot have ability without apprenticeship'. Mack then argued that the proposed clause was too rigid and suggested a form of words that would allow only tradesmen to do tradesmen's work. The tradesmen asked, 'what is the difference between a tradesman and the man who serves an apprenticeship?' W. H. Hampton, the workshops' representative on the executive, tried to argue that the problem would be resolved if the department agreed to pay any man doing skilled work the rate for skilled men, but the tradesmen disagreed. Discussion then turned to the turners' shop, for some of the new machines of the 1880s and 1890s could be operated by machinists who had not served apprenticeships. The deputation still insisted that this work had to be reserved for men who had served apprenticeships.<sup>[107](#)</sup>

The ASRS executive discussed the matter alone that night. The next day Mack informed the tradesmen that the union rejected the demand that their wage claim receive priority, and Clauses 13 and 14. The Tradesmen's Association promptly distributed ballot papers through all workshops asking the tradesmen whether they favoured "FORMING AN ORGANISATION", with government recognition, for the purpose of looking after the interests of tradesmen'. They also circulated a petition to present to the Railways Committee of the House. The rejection of Clauses 13 and 14, more than the refusal to give priority to the wage demand, created fertile soil for the secessionists. Hillside was typical, with almost daily meetings. Mack's local henchman reported that the 'petition is being signed by a large number' of tradesmen in the workshops, who finally voted 18–20 to form 'AN ORGANISATION ...'. Tradesmen working elsewhere, such as the 'Loco & Ways & Works Shops', gave little support, and about twenty-five Hillside tradesmen failed to vote.<sup>[108](#)</sup> Battle raged for the hearts and minds of the 1,338 tradesmen who belonged to the ASRS. The new organisation won impressive support, although ASRS organisers claimed that many of the men had repented of supporting the new organisation when they heard the true facts. Such claims probably deserve to be taken with the proverbial

grain of salt. Despite the Railway Tradesmen's Association's attempt to use the 'Strike Bogey', a none too subtle criticism of the ASRS's decision to affiliate with the syndicalist Transport Workers' Advisory Board, the Railways Committee of the House decided to refuse recognition to the Tradesmen's Association because of the war.<sup>109</sup>

Following their defeat the Hillside tradesmen lapsed into lethargy. The Hillside branch often had difficulty attracting a quorum, probably because the secessionist tradesmen refused to attend.<sup>110</sup> The branch kept meeting, however, denouncing 'profiteers', demanding adequate pay for soldiers and condemning the coalminers' strike. The erosion of relativities for skill worried the tradesmen most, for by the end of 1917 machinists and skilled labourers earned as much as second-grade tradesmen. They dealt with this in their customary manner, searching for a suitable individual case with which they could open a breach for second-grade tradesmen to obtain first-grade pay. In 1918 they found one. J. Haig, a second-grade boilermaker who had worked at Hillside for twenty-one years, appealed against the department's refusal to promote him to first grade. Supported by his foreman and the workshops' manager, Haig attacked the distinction between the two grades—the ability to read a blueprint, lay out work, prepare templates and decide the materials needed. He argued that only one first-grade man in any shop did such work (for which he received sixpence an hour extra). In short, all but one of the first-grade boilermakers did exactly the same work that Haig did, operating 'punching and shearing machines', and most of them, according to the foreman, were less skilful at that work than Haig. The department argued that first-grade men had to be capable of 'first-grade work' because seniority determined who got the job and at some point Haig's inadequacy would become apparent. The Appeal Board found for Haig and the Minister overruled it. It was a slow campaign but the men never gave up. As the general manager later complained, the union often used special circumstances to win a case, then tried to use it as a precedent for improving the conditions or wages of whole categories of men.<sup>111</sup>

As a rule issues such as promotion aroused less intense feelings than injustice or tyranny. When the new workshops' manager refused to allow fifty returned servicemen time off for Anzac Day, the shops stopped work

and denounced his 'despotism' (the same issue had erupted in 1916). The government's decision to give only married men the second war 'bonus' also roused single men to fury, but, as a rule, they lacked the institutional power to do much and tended to adopt the individualist response of resigning. Gumboots for 'Labourer Guthrie' also became a *cause célèbre*. Guthrie, an elderly man, had to hose down the latrines each lunchtime and got wet feet. The branch asked the department for gumboots but head office refused, thus showing that 'the Departmental value placed on an employee's health is less than the cost of a pair of gumboots'. The executive council took up the issue but it took a year to extract gumboots for Guthrie.<sup>112</sup> The dismissal of 'Fitter J. C. Smith' for refusing a transfer because of his wife's illness led to a 'mass meeting' (a new phrase at Hillside).<sup>113</sup>

The branch became more militant in 1918–19. The rate of pay for working 'acetone welders', bolt-making machines and electric cranes became contentious, suggesting that dilution had become an issue. The department's refusal to deal with many grievances until after the war, compounded by the men's growing disgruntlement with inflation, also increased their volatility. Not that they showed any enthusiasm for the Labour Party. In June 1919, for reasons which remain unclear, the branch received an influx of men from the Maintenance and Way workshops, long hostile to secession and sympathetic to the Labour Party. Within a month the new members, who continued to pour in, had admitted the apprentices to membership. In 1920 the president stood down and T. C. McLennan, a casual boilermaker from the Maintenance and Way workshops (just north of the Oval), succeeded him. Although the branch now boasted 461 members, few skilled metal workers on the permanent staff played an active part over the next few years. Nor is there much evidence that casual skilled metal workers from Hillside played much part.<sup>114</sup> Within the railways generally, however, casuals felt aggrieved by their second-class status, and the union pushed continuously to win for all categories of casual the same perks and conditions that permanent men enjoyed. McLennan himself felt aggrieved. He had not lost a day's work in his seventeen years; yet had been declined permanent status when he ended his apprenticeship because he failed to pass the medical examination. Few at Hillside took much interest in the status of casuals.<sup>115</sup>

## VII

In the 1920s the Reform Government, led by the Minister of Railways, Gordon Coates, finally tackled the country's antiquated railway system with the intention of making it efficient. Coates appointed two British experts, Sir Samuel Fay and Sir Vincent Raven, to investigate the entire system. They found much wrong and did not spare the workshops, repeating many of the points which the Addington inquiry had made in 1909. Obsolete machinery, the lack of systematic factory layout and the absence of toolrooms made efficient production schedules impossible. They concluded that two workshops could easily meet the entire country's needs and recommended the appointment of someone skilled in scientific management to look more carefully at the organisation of work in the workshops.<sup>116</sup> Coates found a New Zealand-born production engineer, E. T. Spidy, who wanted to return home. Spidy had long worked for Canadian Pacific, one of the first railway companies anywhere to adopt scientific management and build new workshops in accord with the principles of the new method. It is a mistake to think of scientific management only in terms of the differential piece rate or incentive wage systems; it involved every aspect of the factory and presupposed certain spatial arrangements. Workshops built after the second industrial revolution easily incorporated the principles of scientific management but those built earlier, like the New Zealand ones, could not be adapted. Knocking them down to start again—which Fay–Raven recommended—was a very expensive option.

Before Spidy arrived, however, the ASRS played into the government's hands by calling its first strike ever. Defeat—which came quickly—gave the secessionist tradesmen in the workshops their chance. Hillside, the only workshops to vote against the strike, albeit by only 283–249, appears to have wavered in its loyalties for some weeks. Ingram, the boilermaker who had led the secession locally in 1916, hurled himself into the fray. The fledgling Railway Tradesmen's Association (RTA), which apparently had the initial support of only 55 per cent of the country's tradesmen (as against 90 per cent in 1916), promised 'we will not use the "strike" methods'.<sup>117</sup> Ingram fought hard and successfully to persuade the tradesmen that secession had nothing to do with the strike but reflected the long-standing

inability of the tradesmen to make the ASRS responsive to their needs. It was not just that unskilled men could not represent skilled men. M. J. O'Connor, a local member of the national council, reported Ingram as saying:

One of the big questions thrown at us has been that the introduction of machinery is ousting the tradesmen and when I look back at the introduction of machinery into Hillside some thought it would mean the sack for them but today there is a far greater demand for tradesmen.

The remark intriguingly suggests that socialist ideology had cast skilled men as anachronisms, dinosaurs of industrial civilisation, and that they were now taking their revenge. Ingram campaigned throughout the South Island, debating the issues at large meetings with the ASRS president. Even in August, according to the Hillside branch's long-serving secretary, A. Melville (a moulder who lived on the Main South Road), a 'mass meeting' denounced the RTA unanimously. Two weeks later he told Mack that only nine Hillside tradesmen still remained in the ASRS. By then the government had recognised the new union.<sup>118</sup>

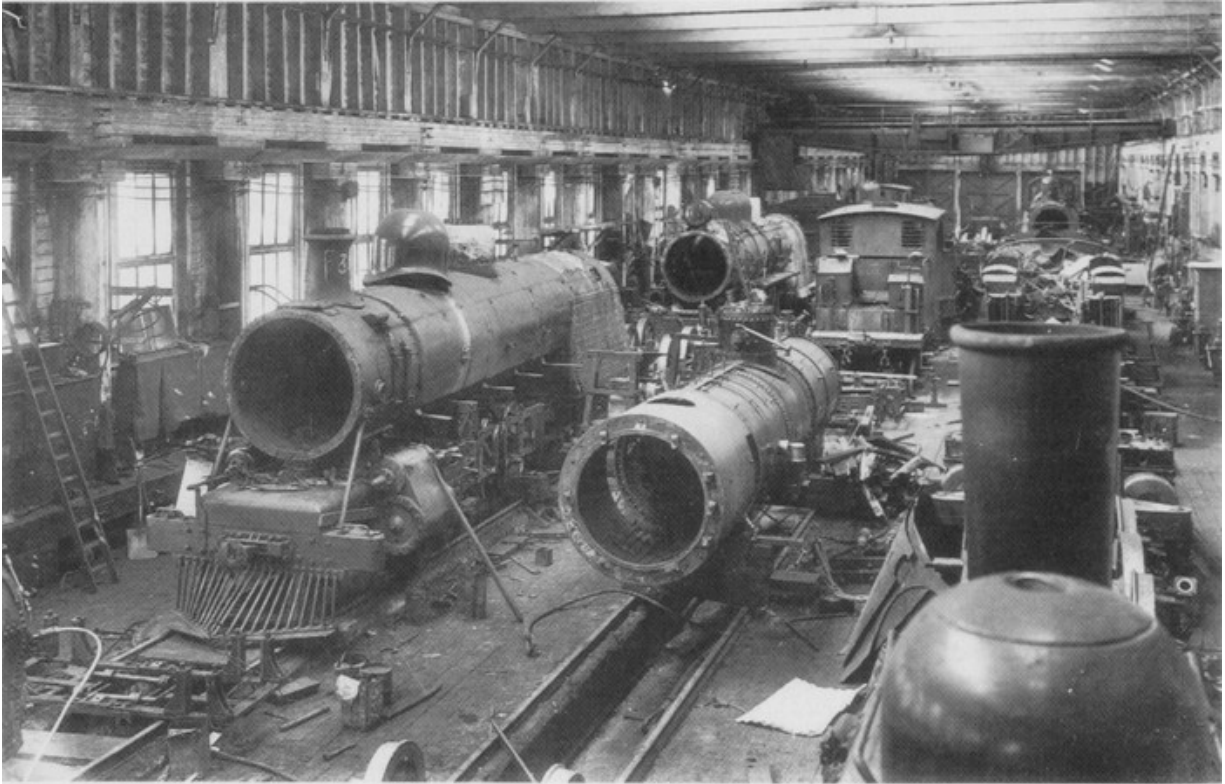
The Hillside branch of the ASRS survived, but only just. In 1926, despite appointing subcollectors for each shop, arrears had become such a problem that the branch debated whether to sue defaulters. The RTA did not dispute the ASRS's jurisdiction over the 'unskilled' but, clearly, the fettlers, strikers, holders-up and machinists were not about to incur the wrath of their masters while feelings still ran high. Yardmen and coal trimmers tried to sustain the ASRS presence.<sup>119</sup> The tradesmen, led locally by Ingram, moved quickly to exploit the government's goodwill, demanding various reforms with single-minded vigour. Not surprisingly the RTA demanded an end to the practice of paying apprentices just out of their time at the bottom of the second grade—which suggests that the old system of making them serve a three-year probation had been abolished earlier—and the practice of discriminating against apprentices classified as second-class tradesmen. In 1926, it seems, the department gave in (although the concession may have been part of a larger deal related to the reorganisation). The new organisation also took up its old cause, insisting that the only 'avenue of promotion to blacksmith [or any other trade] is from apprenticeship ... it is the duty of the [Railway Management] Board to see that this is the avenue the men come through, otherwise what is the use of having apprenticeship

at all'.<sup>120</sup>

If the new union won some issues, it lost on one which nicely reveals much about the labour process. The first acetylene-welding machines had been introduced into the boilermakers' shops in 1911 but the men disliked them. '[F]rom the Workshop Manager down, they are afraid of the Acetone plant at Hillside, and of all the boilermakers there, only two are willing to undertake the work.'<sup>121</sup> The department paid a special allowance of sixpence a day and then one shilling (sixpence was customary for extra-skilled work). Hillside's boilermakers changed their tune. Welding became the prerogative of seniority. As welding became more common during the war the department tried to deny welders the assistance of an unskilled labourer and to specify a range of pay scales for different classes of work. The men resisted.<sup>122</sup> Blacksmiths by now often undertook welding in outside shops, although they never did 'boiler work proper'. When the chief engineer at Addington suggested this in May 1923 the general manager flatly refused. In 1925, possibly thanks to Spidy, matters came to a head. The chief mechanical engineer wrote to the Railway Board seeking permission to recruit welders from among the machinists. 'How ... [the boilermakers established a monopoly over welding] is not exactly known, for it is not the practice either in England, Canada, or the United States. In those countries it is work for men from the machinist grade, and only is a tradesman job in special instances such as welding in boiler sheets ... 75 per cent of our welding ... has not the slightest connection to boilermaking Worse, because of the one-shilling bonus, the best boilermakers did nothing but welding.'<sup>123</sup>

The Railway Board ascertained the 'practice ... in privately owned workshops'. Except in Invercargill, tradesmen but not boilermakers controlled the work and received one shilling a day extra under their award (the award allowed machinists to weld but none did so). The board was in a businesslike mood and approved the request.<sup>124</sup> Ingram promptly headed a deputation to the board. He cited his experience in 'the Old Country', which he had visited in 1919, and declared himself mystified by the board's decision to introduce 'the unskilled into this particular class of work'. When the chairman objected that 'A machinist is not a labourer', Ingram retorted: 'Well he is a skilled labourer. He is not an artisan ...'. Ingram returned to

the fray the next day, declared his men upset and disappointed, and asked: 'what is the use of going through the apprenticeship system at all?' At this point the chairman tried to play down the significance of the change, extolled the apprenticeship system and said that the department envisaged taking on only the occasional talented machinist for welding work. Not mollified at all, the RTA organised 'mass' demonstrations at the various workshops.<sup>125</sup> The RTA's opposition might have been expected, but the ASRS agreed emphatically with its rival. Melville, Hillside's long-standing secretary and a member of the national executive, declared, 'We consider [welding] is tradesmen's work. It always has been tradesmen's work.' The chairman, at times a bumptious technocrat, explained that the department would continue to pay welders a tradesman's rate, but not the rate for a first-class boilermaker plus all allowances. 'That is not done anywhere except in the New Zealand Railways.'<sup>126</sup> The board refused to back down and eventually decided to pay welders at the rate for second-grade tradesmen and ruled that boilermakers who continued to specialise in welding would forfeit their claim to further promotion. Only boilermakers could do 'boiler work proper', however, and when on such work they continued to receive the same extra payment and the assistance of a helper. Within a year, ironically if predictably, the welders had already made substantial progress in establishing their right 'to be provided with a mate' by using their equipment in ways that made a 'mate' necessary. They were also demanding extra pay.<sup>127</sup>



*The old erecting shop in 1925. Dismantling wagons and locomotives for repair and assembling new ones required great precision and exactness. As Godber's photograph shows, the muddle did not help and the skilled men agreed with Spidy on that point. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

The rise of a new union and the battle over welding made little difference to Spidy, who started at Petone and then visited the other workshops. He found the same situation everywhere. Using the Canadian Pacific workshops at Montreal as his yardstick, he found the New Zealand ones to be slow, inefficient and poorly organised. The shops had to tackle jobs with obsolete equipment, much work was wastefully duplicated and many shops were too small. Hillside was the same. Boiler repairs and the construction of tank locomotives competed for space and tools while wagon frames were being built outside for want of adequate accommodation. Worst of all, he found that 'costs, as a means of management, are no factor at all'.<sup>128</sup> Spidy became a well-known figure in the country's workshops in 1925–26 as he preached his new gospel and dealt with the concerns of staff at all levels. The key to scientific management, rational production scheduling and modernisation of equipment, quickly won widespread support from the tradesmen, the department and the government (for Coates was now prime

minister).<sup>129</sup>

The men happily accepted job cards and daily time cards but they refused to countenance the 'premium bonus'. *Railway Review* described management's argument: 'The operator is "allowed" a certain "time" to do definite work, and he is paid, as a bonus, one-half of the time he saves, at his regular rate.' The men, led by those who had experience in other countries, believed that the new premium bonus was but the long-hated piece rate in new garb. The men closed ranks and the politicians backed off.<sup>130</sup> It is not clear how the leading hands, foremen and workshops' managers responded to the premium bonus but they may well have been sceptical or opposed. Spidy campaigned hard in the various workshops, for he saw the new pay system as the coping stone for the new edifice. He failed to convince the men. Shop culture frustrated his plans, although it may well be that the premium bonus acted as a lightning rod for the disquiet and anxiety aroused by the prospect of a total reorganisation of the works. Yet it threatened—at least in the long run—the apprentice-based crafts, for if speed became the measure of man then training would count for less. The old fear of 'sweating' proved to be the most potent rallying cry. 'Sweating' meant that even skilled men who had served apprenticeships would end up destitute.



*Godber's 1926 shot of the workshops captures the size of the complex just before the new workshops were built. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

The men were anxious because of the scale and speed of the reorganisation, but Spidy and the department anticipated most problems and moved promptly to deal with any unexpected ones. And by and large the men were happy. Spidy's daily time card aroused no hostility, the skilled men were pleased that the department introduced some formal training as part of apprenticeship, and everybody seems to have been delighted to get rid of the old disciplinary system, based on fines and penalties. A new merit system, based on rewards, met with widespread approval. So did the abolition of the grades for tradesmen and the introduction of a standard rate for all skilled men.<sup>[131](#)</sup> Yet these reforms, while important, counted for less with the skilled men than the government's commitment to the modernisation and reorganisation of the workshops. This entailed rebuilding all the shops at Hillside, installing the most modern technologies, and providing 'proper washing facilities, drinking fountains and receptacles for the workmen's clothes ...' (as Spidy proudly informed the large crowd which attended the official opening). A 'new and commodious combined Social Hall and Library' was also built and the Hillside Orchestra, in abeyance for some years, re-formed to herald the new era.<sup>[132](#)</sup>



*A Ww class locomotive, designed for shunting. The men of the workshops got great satisfaction from building locomotives, although this was only a small part of the work at Hillside. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

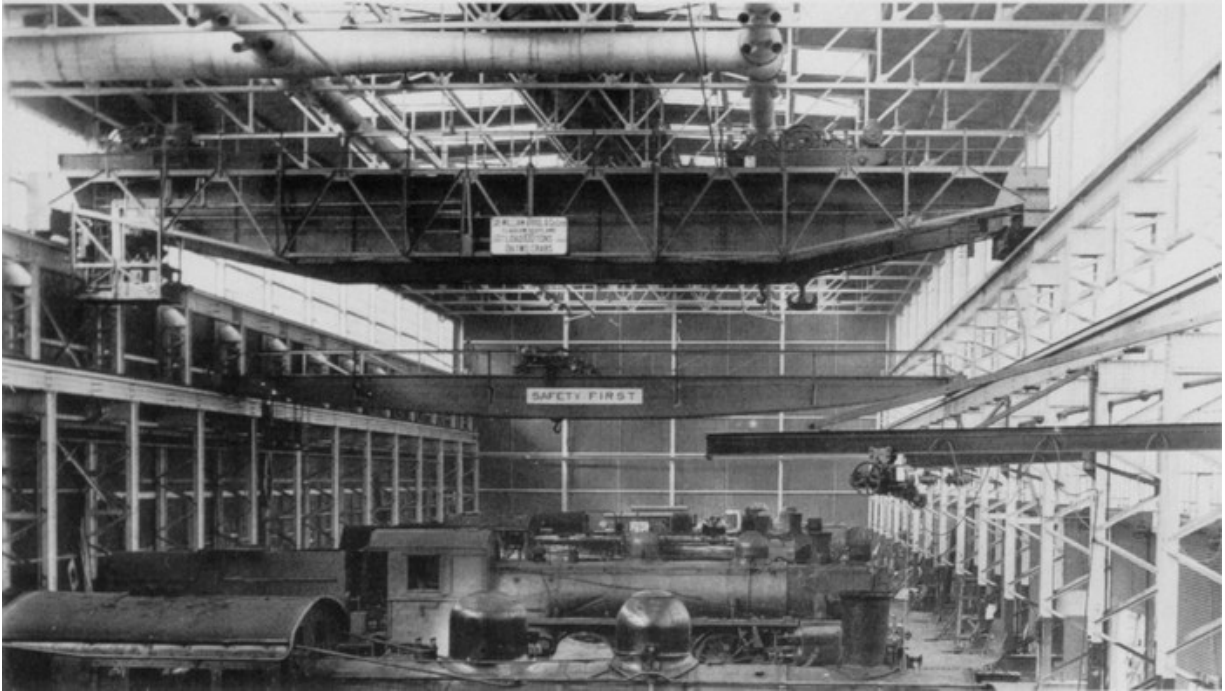
Skilled metal workers, like the men in the handicraft trades, took enormous pride in their skill and ability. Because of the importance of machines in industrial society, not to mention their role in generating progress, they also had a high estimate of the importance of their work. Many of the men simply loved machines in general and locomotives in particular. The union's journal reflected this, running stories and photographs that one might consider more appropriate in the department's house journal, *Railway Magazine*. Most skilled men also took great interest in the scientific theory relevant to their trade. The men got great pride from their work, and especially from the new locomotives that they made. In 1926, as the new workshops were opened and the new machines were installed, the skilled men of the metal trades almost rejoiced to see the value of their work recognised. All of those interviewed still remembered the contrast between old and new in vivid detail. The union's journal ran fulsome accounts of the new technologies.<sup>133</sup> Local newspapers carried

lengthy features. Modernisation

made reorganisation palatable to the men, but only because they had deflected those proposals which threatened the apprentice-based crafts and their control of the labour process while extracting an enhanced sense of worth. The unity and power of shop culture, resting as it did on the autonomous industrial craftsman, modified and controlled the larger reorganisation.

## VIII

This case study of the Hillside workshops reveals several complexities and inadequacies in the theories relating to social class and skill. As employees of government, all stood in identical relation to the means of production. Hierarchies of authority were more important, but had little significance in structuring class relations in the workshops or the community. Market position may have played some part in the tradesmen's secession, but cannot explain the timing of that secession. The historical experience of the tradesmen no less than their obstinate refusal to surrender their sense of being skilled, despite the sirens of new and revolutionary ideologies which stressed class rather than craft, played a more important role. But craft and class coexisted, both resting on a moral consensus, the craft's strategies of exclusion in constant tension with the universal claims of class (especially as the idea of industrial unionism flourished). On most working days that tension lay quiescent but in the complex process of constructing an ideology centred on the universal claims of class, a process which accelerated during the war, that tension always retained the power to disrupt. The disputed nature of skill, essentially real or socially constructed, lay at the heart of the tension between craft and class. New machines kept that issue alive on the floor of the workshops, and especially in the machine shop. None of the men noted that their definition of skill excluded women.



*Godber's view of the new erecting shop in 1928. It remains almost identical today. The men were less impressed with the provisions for their safety and hygiene, however, than with their access to the newest technologies. They saw nothing wrong with a bit of honest dirt. Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

This chapter also reveals the inadequacy of labour-process theory in understanding Caversham's largest industrial factory.<sup>134</sup> Research into the labour process has tended to polarise around the relative importance of structure and agency. Those who stress structure have seen labour as subordinate; those who stress agency have seen the rank and file on the shop floor as oppositional, resistant to the prerogatives of capital. Hillside renders both perspectives inadequate. The power of shop culture gave them agency. When frustrated on any issue they turned to politics with marked success. For much of this period they were content if not complacent, because they played a decisive role in negotiating the terms on which they worked (even after the introduction of production scheduling). A similar situation almost certainly existed in the city's privately owned engineering shops, for skill was central to production.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'Engineering and Kindred Industries: Report of Mr M. P. Cameron ...', *AJHR*, 1911, H-2, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Lucy Duncan, 'Hillside Railway Workshops 1875–1920', 452 class essay, OU, 1982, pp. 7–12 and David Thomson, 'Caversham—1902–1922: A Brief Survey of the Skilled ...', Caversham Project working paper, Dec. 1922.

<sup>3</sup> *AJHR*, 1874, E–3, p. 72 and *Otago Witness*, 29 May 1875, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1880, E–1, p. 108 and 1881, D–1, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Basic information about Hillside is assembled in 'Hillside Railway Workshops: Items of Interest to Visitors', New Zealand Government Railways, 1962; *Report of the Workshops Redevelopment Working Party*, Sept. 1978 (kindly lent by Euan McQueen); and Duncan, 'Hillside Railway Workshops 1875–1920', pp. 1–5. For the precise references see *AJHR*, 1886, D–1, p. 4; 1887, D–1, p. 4; 1892, D–2, p. 9; 1899, D–2, p. 13; 1904, D–2, p. 8; and 1905, D–2, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Jeremy Brecher's interview with W. M. (Bill) Pimley, 30 March 1987, Tape 1, Side A, 022, 084, 304, Otago Early Settlers' Association. Pimley, who served his apprenticeship as a fitter at Addington, arrived at Hillside in 1915.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 401, 418.

<sup>8</sup> In all countries workshops were organised in the same way; see Jeremy Brecher and Erik Olssen, 'The Power of Shop Culture: The Labour Process in the New Zealand Railway Workshops, 1890–1930', *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 350–75.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Pimley, Tape 1, Side B, 437.

<sup>10</sup> See D. Harris Hastings (time-keeper at Hillside) to Sidey, 6 Sept. 1906, Sidey MSS, 605/11.

<sup>11</sup> *AJHR*, 1902, H–11, p. xiii and 1919, D–2, p. 30 (certainty is impossible because figures for workshops were not identified).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, H–11, *passim*, 1904, H–11, p. 10 and Pimley Interview, Tape 1, Side B, 71–85.

<sup>13</sup> There is surprisingly little known about the Division; see *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 1 March 1928, pp. 44–45.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Pimley, Tape 1, Side A, 247.

<sup>15</sup> This paragraph is based on the letters and petitions in Railways' Department archives, R–3 14/4948/1, National Archives.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, J. S. Collings, an Australian union organiser, in 'New Zealand—A Tory Cursed Land', *RR*, 1 June 1923, p. 247. This was the

union's monthly paper.

[17](#) They were: Petone, 1879; Wanganui, 1880; Addington, 1881; and Newmarket, 1884.

[18](#) See *RR*, Feb. 1908, p. 9; 10 Feb. 1911, p. 65; 9 Feb. 1919, p. 57.

[19](#) *RR*, 5 Mar. 1920, p. 125 for a subscription list; for the debate 18 Oct. 1918, p. 497, 25 July 1919, p. 328, 17 Oct. 1919, pp. 477–8.

[20](#) Minutes of ASRS National Executive, 10 June 1890 (for Dunedin's vote) and 20 Jan. 1891, ASRS MSS, National Union of Railwaymen, Wellington. The MHRs were: 'Percival, Reeves, Pinkerton, Earnshaw, Tanner, Kelly, Hutchison'. This novel constitutional arrangement quickly proved unworkable, but as the Minutes make clear, some of the MHRs happily represented the union in Parliament; e.g. Minutes, 10 March, 17 July and 3 Sept. 1891, 17 June and 15 July 1892, and 5 June 1893.

[21](#) J. D. Henning, 'Government Railwaymen and Industrial Relations: 1884–1894', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1984, chs. 1–3 and p. 83 for the quotation from *PD*, v. 78 (1892), p. 436. For Seddon see R. M. Burdon, *King Dick: A Biography of Richard John Seddon*, Christchurch, 1955, pp. 2–5.

[22](#) There was one Appeal Board for each island, consisting of a judge and two elected assessors, one from each division; 'Government Railways Act', *The Statutes of New Zealand ...*, Wellington, 1894, pp. 165–70.

[23](#) For Ronayne, see *RR*, 9 Jan. 1909, p. 10 and 7 May 1909, p. 134. The conditions were: never to affiliate with an outside body, seek a closed shop, select officers not employed by the department and to confine their objects 'exclusively ... to ... their interests as railways employees'; Minutes, 10 Aug. 1894 (the men accepted 1120–4).

[24](#) 'Government Railways Classification Act', *Statutes*, 1896, pp. 114–27 and R. J. Polashek, *Government Administration in New Zealand*, Wellington and London, 1958, pp. 101–5. By 1910 this system had become extraordinarily complex with 'temporary casuals', 'emergency casuals', 'hour-to-hour casuals' and 'probationers' for each category; *RR*, 21 Oct. 1910, p. 456.

[25](#) *Statutes*, 1896, pp. 114–27 and *RR*, Nov. 1897, p. 252 and Feb. 1898, p. 35. For the importance of promotion see Peter Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen: The Emergence and Growth of Railway Labour 1830–1870*, London, 1970, ch. 8 and Walter Licht, *Working for the Railroad: The*

*Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton, 1982, pp. 147–53.

[26](#) Ronayne's testimony to an inquiry into allegations of 'systematic loafing' at the Addington Railway Workshops; *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 45. This was also the situation in Britain and North America; see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, pp. 113–18, 254–5, 263–4.

[27](#) *PD*, v. 96 (1896), p. 570, Cadman.

[28](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 647–8, Cadman. Until 1906 the General Manager's office dealt with all cases but the burden of work then forced him to devolve responsibility to specialist boards; *RR*, 7 May 1909, p. 134 and 2 July 1909, p. 207. Railway workers in Britain and North America also demanded classification and seniority; see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, chs. 8–9 and Licht, *Railroad*, pp. 131, 212.

[29](#) Craig Littler, 'Understanding Taylorism', *British Journal of Sociology*, v. 29 (June 1978), p. 187.

[30](#) *PD*, v. 96 (1896), pp. 647–8 and ASRS National Executive Minutes, 18 Oct. 1895 to 28 May 1897, *passim*.

[31](#) *PD*, *ibid.*, pp. 639–42 (Earnshaw); pp. 642–4 (Morrison); p. 646 (Captain Russell). The perks included one week's paid holiday each year, an annual railway pass for the employee and his family and generous accident pay.

[32](#) For further discussion see above pp. 198–9.

[33](#) Interview with Pimley, Tape 1, Side A, 494 and for the National Executive's refusal to act on complaints about classification, Minutes, 4 Feb., 13 and 27 May, and 10 June 1898.

[34](#) Work began in 1895, but it took until 1900 for the union and the government to reach agreement; ASRS Minutes, 8 June and 28 Sept. 1900. Such schemes were not unknown elsewhere on the railways; see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, pp. 158–62 and Licht, *Railroad*, pp. 212–13, 263.

[35](#) *RR*, 2 July 1909, p. 203 and 24 Sept. 1926, p. 535. The turners and the ASRS sustained a long campaign to have turners appointed as foremen in the machine shops, but without success; *ASRS Biennial Conference, 1923, Interview with General Manager*, Wellington, 1923, p. 60.

[36](#) Ronayne to Chief Locomotive Engineer, 26 Sept. 1896, R–3 14/5281 and General Manager to Director Seddon Memorial College, 7 March 1919, R–3 12/1505/1. For the change see *RR*, 24 Sept. 1926, pp. 534–5 and for

examples of patronage E. Willis to Sidey 21 Jan. 1907; J. Caldwell to Sidey, 17 Aug. 1908; and J. S. Burnett to Sidey, n.d., Sidey MSS, 605/13.

[37](#) Interviews with Pimley (see above n. 6); R. W. Rutherford, 14 April 1987; David Fenby, 13 April 1987; Lionel Jones, 13 March 1987; and Jim Addison, 24 April 1987 (all abstracts and tapes are held by the Otago Early Settlers' Association, Dunedin). Rutherford began at Hillside as an apprentice boilermaker in 1915 and was interviewed by Brecher and me; Fenby as an apprentice fitter in 1924 and was interviewed by Brecher; Jones worked there as a fitter in the 1940s and 1950s and was interviewed by Brecher; and Addison served his apprenticeship in the 1940s and was Director of Welfare Services in 1987. He provided an overview and a tour. I am also grateful to Jack Duncan for taking me (and various classes) on tours of the workshops.

[38](#) Chief Mechanical Engineer to General Manager, 18 Dec. 1918, R3 12/1505/1. However, a number of those interviewed did, suggesting that the Chief Mechanical Engineer was making a point.

[39](#) Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D-4A, pp. 45-50.

[40](#) 'Extract from Report ...' 10 July 1913 and 23 Feb. 1914, R3 12/1505/1.

[41](#) 'Railway Statement', *AJHR*, 1898, D-2, p. xi.

[42](#) Some evidence suggests that able young men disliked seniority and preferred promotion to be based on merit alone; see *RR*, April 1908, pp. 6-7.

[43](#) *RR* printed the verdict and the case for the union, 29 June 1923, pp. 307-16. See too the president's report to the *ASRS Biennial Conference*, 1923, pp. 1-2 and *RR*, 8 Feb. 1924, p. 41.

[44](#) It is not clear when this policy was adopted but it was unquestioned by early this century; see *AJHR*, 1905, D-2, p. ix. American and British companies had also adopted similar policies at least a generation earlier; Licht, *Railroad*, pp. 169-72 and Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, pp. 148-9.

[45](#) For length of service see Lucy Duncan, 'Hillside Railway Workshops', p. 17 and Table F, p. 18. The analysis of Hillside workers is based on the returns in *AJHR*, 1902, 1911, 1922, D-3.

[46](#) It is not known when the principle was conceded in Britain, although the National Union of Railwaymen was still demanding it in 1911. In the

United States the shop crafts obtained it only during the World War I and had to struggle to retain it.

[47](#) Interview, Tape 1, Side A, 040, 056.

[48](#) Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D-4A, p. 12.

[49](#) On one occasion even the pro-government *ODT* thought it unfortunate that nine men with twenty-six dependants, two of whom had brothers in the NZEF and one of whom had served in the Boer War, had been laid off; see *Evening Star*, 23 Dec. 1915 and *ODT*, 24 Dec. 1915, Sidey MSS, 605/7.

[50](#) Interviews with Pimley, Fenby, Jones and Rutherford.

[51](#) *RR*, 30 July 1909, pp. 236-7.

[52](#) Ronayne to Sec. ASRS, 7 May 1913, R3 12/2910/1.

[53](#) *RR*, 21 Aug. 1908, p. 5 and 9 Feb. 1912, p. 57.

[54](#) *RR*, 14 Jan. 1916, p. 30 and 10 March 1916, p. 126.

[55](#) *RR*, 14 Dec. 1917, pp. 543-4 and 8 Feb. 1918, p. 143; R3 12/ 1505/1 for correspondence; and *Apprenticeship Question ... 1923: Precis of Proceedings at a Conference of Employers, Workers, the Education Department, and the Department of Labour ...*, Wellington, 1923.

[56](#) This was the departmental rule; Chief Mechanical Engineer to General Manager, 23 Nov. 1916, R3 12/1505/1.

[57](#) Testimony of various foremen during Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D-4A: e.g. J. T. Henderson, p. 26. W. H. Cole, p. 31, complained that he had no leading hand, but this was unusual as he had ninety-one men to supervise.

[58](#) *RR*, Feb. 1908, pp. 6-7, 8 March 1918, p. 117, and 3 May 1918, p. 229. For a rare photograph, see *RR*, 4 April 1924, p. 148.

[59](#) E.g. *RR*, 29 May 1908, p. 9 and 14 Dec. 1917, p. 539.

[60](#) Between 1896 and 1912 only 196 men secured this promotion. After that it became still harder; see *RR*, 28 June 1912, p. 277 and 21 Sept. 1917, p. 406.

[61](#) Monte Calvert, *The Mechanical Engineer in America, 1830-1910: Professional Cultures in Conflict*, Baltimore, 1967, demonstrates that the champions of shop culture—which included many of the engineering-entrepreneurial elite—remained powerful until World War I. Their major opponents, the proponents of formal educational requirements for mechanical engineers, scarcely existed in New Zealand. Nor did such

industries as electrical engineering, however, which first accepted the need for educational qualifications rather than an apprenticeship. In the US, however, all mechanical engineers agreed on the importance of productivity and profitability.

[62](#) Interview with Pimley Tape 1, Side B, 031.

[63](#) *RR*, May 1908, pp. 26–27.

[64](#) The department suspended the ban during the flu epidemic. The union later argued that the men stayed at their work so much better when they could smoke and in 1923 the ban was permanently lifted; *ASRS Interview with General Manager of Railways ...*, Wellington, 1923, p. 1.

[65](#) Interview with Rutherford.

[66](#) See *RR*, 11 Dec. 1908, pp. 9–11.

[67](#) Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 34. For a fuller discussion see Olssen, ‘Railway Workers and Scientific Management’, in John E. Martin and Kerry Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History*, Palmerston North, 1991, pp. 128–41.

[68](#) For instance see *RR*, 30 July 1909, p. 229; 19 Nov. 1909, pp. 381–2; 23 Sept. 1910, pp. 383, 387–8; 18 Nov. 1910, pp. 469, 503; 5 May 1911, p. 235; 25 Aug. 1911, pp. 383–4.

[69](#) Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 24.

[70](#) Interview with R. Rutherford. Men who had started later confirmed this, e.g. David Fenby and Jim Addison.

[71](#) John Child, ‘Wages Policy and Wages Movements in New Zealand, 1914–1923’, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, v. 13 (1971), pp. 164–76.

[72](#) Pimley Interview, Tape 1, Side B, 422 and *RR*, March 1908, pp. 5–6.

[73](#) He appealed but lost; *RR*, 5 May 1911, p. 235.

[74](#) Alex Walter to Sidey 8 May 1912, Sidey MSS, 605/18.

[75](#) Interview with R. Rutherford, Sir Samuel Fay and Sir Vincent Raven, *Report of the Royal Commission into the Railway Service ...*, Wellington, 1924, p. xxxii; for Britain see Jeffreys, *Engineers*, pp. 170–89; Johnathan Zeitlin, ‘Engineers and Compositors’, in Royden Harrison and Zeitlin (eds), *Divisions of Labour: Skilled Workers and Technological Change in Nineteenth Century England*, Brighton, 1985 and William Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage on the Shop Floor*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990, pp. 193–207.

[76](#) RR, 13 Jan. 1922, pp. 9–25 and 7 April 1922, pp. 167–8.

[77](#) For the quotations, see Mark Perlman, *The Machinists*, Cambridge, Mass., 1961, p. 28 and for the outcome of the British strike, see Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage*, pp. 196–201.

[78](#) Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 24.

[79](#) *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[80](#) Olssen, ‘Railway Workers and Scientific Management’, pp. 130–3.

[81](#) *AJHR*, 1909, Session I, D–4, p. 6 and for the definition RR, 5 March 1909, p. 68.

[82](#) Taylor’s best-known work, *Scientific Management*, appeared only in 1911, years after the main outlines of his philosophy had been worked out and widely publicised. See David Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880–1920*, Madison, 1975 and Frederick W. Taylor and the Rise of *Scientific Management*, Madison, 1980 for a thorough analysis of scientific management in the United States, including: systematic planning, routing, cost accounting methods, systematic analysis of each machine’s capacity and the time needed for each operation, instruction and supervision of each worker, and the differential piece rate. Nelson, *Taylor*, pp. 102–3, discusses the diffusion of Taylor’s ideas.

[83](#) For a different view see Jim McAloon, ‘Working Class Politics in Christchurch, 1905–1914’, MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1986, ch. 2.

[84](#) *AJHR*, 1912, D–2, p. xvi. High-speed steel tools were used in almost every case at Addington; Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 35.

[85](#) J. E. Jenkinson, *ibid.*, p. 8.

[86](#) Interview with R. Rutherford; see also RR, 5 May 1911, p. 231.

[87](#) H. H. Jackson, Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 16.

[88](#) RR, 24 Aug. 1917, p. 361 and Interview with Pimley, Side B, 387–426.

[89](#) RR, 7 May 1909, p. 134; ‘Report ...’, *AJHR*, 1909, Session I, D–4 (including Ronayne’s reply, pp. 8–12).

[90](#) For the library, see RR, 21 Aug. 1908, p. 21 and 27 Aug. 1909, p. 281; the Pioneers, see John Searle to Sidey, 4 July 1908, Sidey MSS 605/13

and *RR*, 17 Dec. 1909, p. 446; and the brigade, *RR*, 7 May 1909, p. 150. For the 1920s see *RR*, 24 Aug. 1923, p. 422 and 21 Sept. 1923, p. 463.

[91](#) Based on the regular column, 'About Ourselves', in *RR* (see 27 Sept. 1910, p. 407 and 26 Aug. 1921, p. 339, for instance).

[92](#) *Evening Star*, 18 Feb. 1907 and 1 March 1915, Sidey MSS, 605/3 and 605/1.

[93](#) E.g. *RR*, Feb. 1908, pp. 6–7. Pimley remarked that British immigrants tended to dominate the union but he may have been referring to a later period; Tape 2, Side B, 015–45.

[94](#) *RR*, 5 March 1909, pp. 84, 92–93 and 27 Aug. 1909, p. 280.

[95](#) *RR*, 11 March 1910, pp. 93–94 and 21 Oct. 1910, p. 445.

[96](#) A. Peters (Sec.) to Sidey, 3 July and 13 Oct. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/16 and *RR*, 20 Sept. 1912, p. 408.

[97](#) *RR*, 22 Sept. 1916, p. 429; 20 Oct. 1916, p. 476; 9 Feb. 1917, p. 87; and 4 May 1917, p. 183. Even in the late 1920s the department used the fact that women had been capable of operating certain machines to resist wage claims; see *RR*, 30 July 1926.

[98](#) The shortage of apprentices created a shortage of tradesmen by 1920. The department tried to cope by increasing the pay for apprentices (and so altering complex relativities) while hiring casuals at the maximum rate of pay. Hundreds of anomalies resulted. See General Manager to District Engineers, 20 Feb. 1920, R–3 12/2910/1; F. W. Furkert (Under-Secretary), 'Memo for Public Service Commissioner: Rates of Pay for Apprentices', 4 Oct. 1921, R–3 14/5281; and Chief Mechanical Engineer, 'Memo: Apprentices', 27 May 1925, R–3 12/1505/1.

[99](#) *RR*, 2 June 1916, p. 231 and Brooking, Thomson and Martin, 'Persistence in Caversham'.

[100](#) *RR*, 7 April 1922, p. 168.

[101](#) E.g. *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 87 and 9 March 1917, p. 119.

[102](#) *ODT*, 7 March 1916, Sidey MSS, 605/7; *RR*, 14 Dec. 1917, p. 569 and 28 June 1918, p. 291. The department informed the Military Service Board for Wellington that 2,600 employees had been given leave, which meant that they could return to their jobs; *RR*, 1 June 1917, p. 235.

[103](#) Duncan, p. 4.

[104](#) *RR*, 20 Oct. 1916, pp. 443–4, 476.

[105](#) The union's reorganisation in 1910 had given the workshops'

tradesmen two representatives on an executive board with eight members; 'The Amalgamated Society', *RR*, 11 March 1910, pp. 93–94.

[106](#) The list of demands is the first document in a file named 'Tradesmen's Interview', ASRS MSS, National Union of Railwaymen, Wellington. I am indebted to the general secretary for permission to use these papers & the union's journal, and to the friendly co-operation of the staff.

[107](#) 'Executive Council's Interview with the Tradesmen's Deputation, May 18th, 1915', pp. 27–33 in 'Tradesmen's Interview' file, ASRS MSS.

[108](#) J. Saunders to Mack, 19 June 1916, 'Interview' file, and for the vote, *PD*, v. 177 (1916), p. 611. Mack to 'My Dear Dick' [Hampton], 16 June 1916, 'Interview' file, gives the number of tradesmen at Hillside.

[109](#) For the hearings see *AJHR*, 1916, I–6A and for the debate in the House *PD*, v. 177 (1916), pp. 611–17.

[110](#) E.g. *RR*, 5 May 1916, p. 209 and *ODT*, 10 April 1916, Sidey MSS, 605/17.

[111](#) *RR*, 28 June 1918, p. 305; 19 Sept. 1919, pp. 391–2 and 'Executive Interview with General Manager Railways, Wellington, May 11th 1923', pp. 6–7 (bound in *RR*, 6 April 1923).

[112](#) *RR*, 26 July 1918, p. 367; 23 Aug. 1918, p. 397; and 4 April 1919, p. 135.

[113](#) *RR*, 15 Nov. 1918, p. 574.

[114](#) For the invasion, 27 June 1919, pp. 281, 283; 25 July 1919, p. 328; 17 Oct. 1919, pp. 477–8; and 5 March 1920, p. 130.

[115](#) *RR*, 1 July 1921, p. 301 and ASRS *Biennial Conference 1923*, pp. 20, 26; for McLennan, 'The Casual', *RR*, 1 July 1921, p. 301; and for Hillside's attitude, *RR*, 15 Dec. 1922, p. 609.

[116](#) *Report of the Royal Commission into the Railway Service, together with ... Evidence and Appendices*, Wellington, 1924.

[117](#) For the strike ballot see ASRS, *Biennial Conference, 1925: Verbatim Report on 1924 Strike ...*, Wellington, 1925, p. 6; RTA to Coates, 24 June 1924, in 'Forming Tradesmen's Association, 1924', ASRS MSS; RTA to Railway Management Board, 24 June 1925, R3 14/5281; *RR*, 6 Feb. 1925, p. 1.

[118](#) For Ingram see M. J. O'Connor to Mack, 14 Aug. 1924 and J. W. Toomey to Mack, 22 Aug. 1924. See also Melville to Mack, 4 and 16 Sept.

1924 and Earland to Mack, 19 Sept. 1924, in 'Forming', ASRS MSS and RR, 19 Sept. 1924, p. 412.

[119](#) RR, 3 April 1925, p. 199 and 28 May 1926, p. 321.

[120](#) RTA to Railway Management Board, 24 June 1925 and Sec. Management Board to Sec. ASRS, 13 Oct. 1929, R3 14/5281.

[121](#) Chief Locomotive Engineer to General Manager, 9 Oct. 1911, R3, 25/1579/1.

[122](#) See various letters for 1919 and T. L. McLean and David Mercer (Hillside) to General Manager, 7 April 1919, *ibid*.

[123](#) 10 June 1925, *ibid*.

[124](#) Letter to Board, 27 July 1925 and Chairman Railway Board to Minister, 4 Sept. 1925, *ibid*.

[125](#) 'Extract from Report on Deputation from the Executive of the NZRTA to the Board of Management 9 October 1925', and for the quotations pp. 2, 7, 89–91 and *New Zealand Times*, 29 Oct. 1925, *ibid*.

[126](#) 'Extract ... Executive of the ASRS and the Members Railway Board 10/11/25', pp. 1, 21, *ibid*.

[127](#) Sec. Railway Board to Sec. RTA, 25 Nov. 1925; *Gazette*, v. 53 (12 Aug. 1926); Chief Mechanical Engineer to Railways Board, 23 Oct. 1926; Sec. Railway Board to Sec. ASRS, 10 Nov. 1926 and to Works Manager Hillside, 17 June 1927, *ibid*.

[128](#) Spidy, 'Memo/3108', R3 1925/343/1. For a fuller discussion see Brecher and Olssen, 'The Power of Shop Culture ...', *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 370–5.

[129](#) Spidy's movements can be followed through the D–2 series in *AJHR*, 1925, pp. ix, xxxiii; 1926, pp. iv–vi; 1927, p. v; 1928, p. viii–x; 1929, pp. iii–iv; 1930, p. iii.

[130](#) RR, 24 Sept. 1926, pp. 507–8; 22 Oct. 1926, 572–3 and, in the same issue, 'ASRS Executive Council, Interview with Acting Minister of Railways ... November 16, 1926', which contained a long discussion on the premium bonus. The acting minister made it clear that there was no intention of introducing the premium bonus for a very long time but that he wanted it thoroughly discussed.

[131](#) 'Mr Coates is no Bureaucrat', RR, 2 July 1926, p. 339.

[132](#) Fay-Raven, *Report*, p. xxxvi, reported that there had been no capital investment in the railways since 1915. For the opening see *New Zealand*

*Railways Magazine*, 2 July 1928, pp. 50–51 and 1 Aug. 1928, p. 45.

[133](#) E.g., *RR*, 28 May 1927, pp. 305–7 (reprinted from the *ODT*).

[134](#) Brecher and I reached the same conclusion, and the rest of this paragraph briefly summarises it; ‘The Power of Shop Culture’, *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 372–5.

## CHAPTER 7

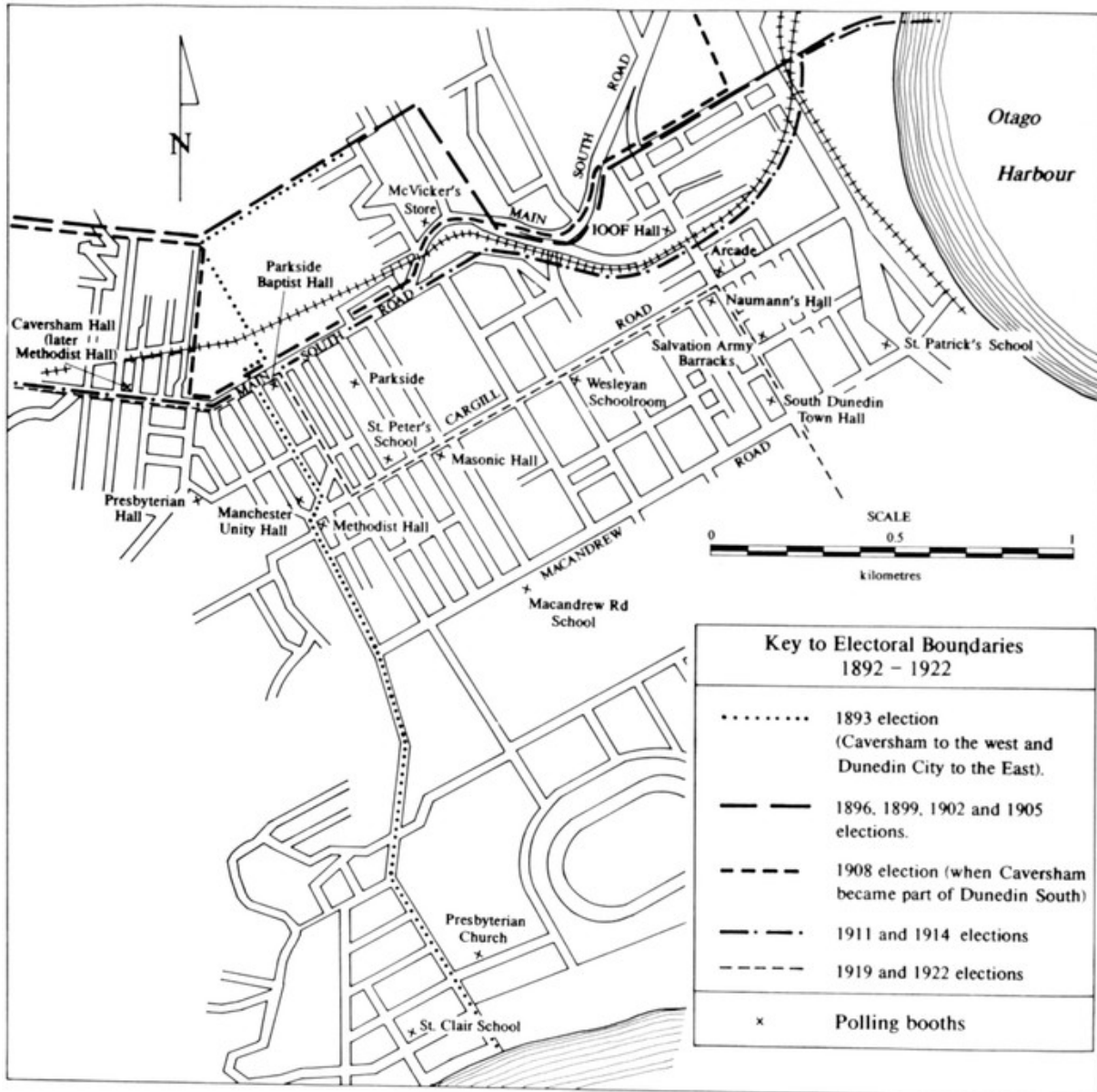
# ***From Apathy to Politics: Masters and Journeymen Mobilise***

The previous chapters have focused on skilled workers and their work, largely in the period from the 1880s until the mid-1920s. As we have seen, the workplace was decisive in reproducing the norms and values of the handicraft trades, but if the skilled felt that their control of the job was endangered, including the relationship between effort and pay, they formed unions, took political action and increasingly subscribed to a socialist political ideology. These themes were implicit in the chapters on the carpenters and the men of the workshops, while the chapter on women workers also showed politics were used to define the meaning of skill and to exclude some people from some workplaces. People constructed the meaning of work no less than the meaning of skill in their everyday lives. Politics became important when meanings became contentious. To understand the relationship between the world of work and politics we need to begin by focusing on the years of the 'Long Depression', for only then did journeymen become politically active. The events of the 1880s, culminating in the maritime strike and the election of 1890, profoundly shaped the experience of the men and women who dominated the adult population of Caversham from the 1890s until the 1920s. They also established patterns of electoral behaviour which still exist today.

In examining politics in Caversham it will be necessary to expand the geographical focus slightly, to include adjacent streets in South Dunedin, because they were part of the Caversham electorate in every election from 1896 until 1905. The problem did not go away when Caversham disappeared as the name for an electorate in 1908, for the two suburbs remained in the same electorate until after the war. It is even more necessary to expand the focus because the main polling booths for South Dunedin were on Cargill Road, the boundary between the two suburbs.

Although people living in Caversham township often invested the boundary with social significance, the people living near it did not. Before the 1919 election men and women from Forbury Corner, Parkside and Kensington probably cast their votes at the Wesleyan schoolroom, the Masonic Hall, or Naumann's Hall, all on the South Dunedin side of Cargill Road, rather than traipse several blocks to the booth in the heart of the township, the one at the foot of The Glen, or the Oddfellows' Hall on Hillside Road. Similarly, once the South Dunedin Town Hall became a polling booth, many voters from around Cargill's Corner probably voted in the Arcade or the Oddfellows' Hall. Map 5 shows the shifting electoral boundaries, the polling booths, and those streets in South Dunedin which are included in the next two chapters.

In analysing politics in Caversham and the nearby streets on The Flat my aim is to explore the links between the organisation of work and the articulation of political and ideological strategies. To ignore politics and ideology is to overlook a major body of evidence about values and aspirations and to assume the primacy of the social over the political and ideological, as if the latter merely reflected the former. Politics constitutes one arena—the workplace is another—where social and cultural meanings are constituted. In these arenas and others, notably family and school, self too is constituted, and 'self interpretation is always part of the reality which we live'.<sup>1</sup> The new political coalition which formed in the late 1880s played an important role, especially in the 1890s, in shaping New Zealand's political system. Equally important, the inherited political traditions of Britain's artisans were used to construct a new ideology centred on the values of the independent or autonomous artisan and his sense of the colony's needs. The word 'his' is used deliberately, for while women obtained the vote in 1893, the same processes analysed in Chapter 4 made them marginal to the construction of a political system centred on the handicraft trades. Within the city, and New Zealand, some women proposed a different political system, but if they had support on The Flat it has left little evidence of its existence.



A word is in order about my method, the ‘thick description’ of politics in one locality. ‘Thick description’, usually used to analyse culture, has the signal advantage of allowing politics to be analysed not merely as a set of policy outcomes or coalitions, but as the arena in which people negotiate and renegotiate their self-interpretations and the meaning of their lives.<sup>2</sup> This method also inverts the usual one of political analysis, which assumes that all localities, once controlled for certain socio-economic variables, respond in the same way and at pretty much the same speed, thus creating a national politics. A quotation from a labour leader or paper anywhere will,

according to this method, illustrate a national trend. Yet the political preoccupations of Caversham's skilled workers were not the key to labour politics in Woolston or Grey Lynn, let alone Christchurch or Auckland. By 1910 the character of the labour movements in the four main cities, and their political cultures, differed considerably.<sup>3</sup> By the same token, the customary method takes political rhetoric at face value, a dangerous procedure when studying a self-consciously new society which borrowed its political language from another world. The preference for national studies, not to mention the (often) disdainful dismissal of local ones, reflects such assumptions. Yet in late-nineteenth-century New Zealand the local was central to politics, as it was to most product markets, some labour markets, and the stratification order.<sup>4</sup> Only by focusing on one locality is it possible to unravel the complex and continuously changing links between the organisation of work, politics and society, and the ways in which people constructed the meanings which shaped their lives.

The analysis of politics as a symbolic system provides the key to understanding the complex relationships between local and national, workshop and industry, individual and society, experience and language. 'An essential character of ... symbolism is its *multivalence*, its capacity to *express simultaneously several meanings the unity between which is not evident on the plane of immediate experience ...*.'<sup>5</sup> A successful symbol thus integrates and unifies diverse realities into a single statement, even if the contradictions and ambiguities are only fleetingly disguised. Some scholars have argued that contradiction and ambiguity are central to the construction of meaning. Be that as it may, language and ideology are enmeshed in this symbolic world.<sup>6</sup> Yet the symbols are not only inherited, but fashioned and arranged, just like William Smyth's birds or Sam Lister's lead type. They might also be contested. The same is true of words, concepts and metaphors. Indeed, in the remaining chapters my method involves deliberately thinking of all words and concepts not simply as words and concepts, analytical devices for describing and classifying, but as multivalent symbols, clues to life as well as (proposed) fulcrums for reform. I propose to undertake this task by constructing a narrative, for while the narrative is a literary form, subject to its own conventions, it also embodies our strong sense that events occur in sequences, and that what has happened

profoundly shapes what will happen. We must start with the tradition of artisan radicalism which the immigrants brought to Caversham before analysing why political apathy gave way to activism in the 1880s.

## I

David Hamer has shown how Liberalism embodied two central characteristics: first, a populist cum democratic belief in the rights of man and second, a political agenda shaped by the experience of the immigrants of the 1870s.<sup>7</sup> The populist–democratic creed had its roots in English Nonconformity—well represented in Caversham—and in a tradition of artisan radicalism. Thomas Paine’s gospel of the Rights of Man, often rendered as the Rights of Englishmen by the 1870s, not to mention his faith in popular government (for men) and equality before the law, deeply shaped the values of most of Caversham’s citizens. They distrusted expertise and admired the practical, disapproved of the heredity principle, opposed ‘class’ legislation and viewed tradition askance. They had great faith in the basic decency and goodness of ordinary people and popular institutions. Above all they believed in the basic equality of men and the dignity of labour. They also hated all forms of arbitrary power. Tyranny, Despotism and Monopoly defined the intolerable. Men no longer thought of such beliefs as philosophical; they had been absorbed into their lives as natural (although the inclusion of women and the issue of power within the family occasioned debate). Small-scale commodity production for the local market and apprentice-based crafts formed the keystones of this egalitarian society, but the beliefs also defined that social system as normal. Only the Chinese were total outsiders. Their presence reduced the significance of inequality among ‘whites’, while the widespread desire to ensure that no more Chinese entered the colony, and that those already here were excluded from all skilled trades, gave unions a popular role throughout the period and reinforced the cohesion of journeymen and masters.

The experience of emigration reinforced the Paineite assumptions which underpinned artisan radicalism. Everyone in Caversham was either an immigrant or the child of immigrants. They had all travelled steerage, learning to co-operate together over a wide range of domestic duties while

living in conditions of minimal privacy.<sup>8</sup> Except for those with family in Dunedin, they had all stayed in the Immigration Barracks in Caversham. The provincial government housed and fed them, and helped them to find work. Indeed both the colonial and provincial governments had enticed the immigrants with a virtual promise of steady work at good wages, and many immigrants had also received subsidised fares. Such inequalities of wealth as existed in New Zealand—small though they were by comparison with Australia, the United States or Britain—scarcely existed in Caversham.<sup>9</sup> Shopkeepers, masters and journeymen dominated.

If migration strengthened egalitarian traditions it also reinforced the importance of mutualism. Paine's stress on political individualism, while lending itself to an attack on private economic power and aristocratic privilege, had long since proved inadequate as a programme for radicals. In Britain artisans had taken the lead in forging institutions of mutual aid which emigration only made more relevant. The concept of mutual co-operation—articulated by men like Robert Owen—also fused with a widespread distrust of national power structures and a belief in the importance of communities rooted in specific localities. 'This was the positive side of popular *laissez-faire* [in England]; a libertarian, egalitarian, fraternal and "State-less"... democracy, in which highly patriotic, independent citizens served the common good ....' Such a world could no longer be found in England, but the belief that it had once existed defined the shape of an ideal society for many skilled immigrants to the colony. They doubtless agreed with J. S. Mill, the great political economist, that *laissez-faire* was principally 'an ideology of local self government'.<sup>10</sup> The deep-rooted colonial suspicion of 'absentees', especially 'foreign absentees' who neither spent nor re-invested their profits in the community, reinforced this potent sense of localism (a foundation stone of French socialism and a widely used justification for anti-Chinese views).<sup>11</sup>

The various trade unions formed in the 1870s and the six friendly societies formed on The Flat between 1875 and 1882, not to mention the Hillside Sick Benefit Society, embodied the values of mutual aid, mutual improvement and brotherhood. In most of these organisations men addressed each other as 'Brother' and they fiercely resisted efforts from provincial or colonial organisations to centralise funds contributed locally.

Co-operation—the coping stone for voluntarism—expressed the values of democratic brotherhood. Those familiar with Robert Owen’s idea that ‘man’s character is made for him, not by him’, saw in voluntarism recognition of natural and universal equality, the ability of people to create institutions for their own purposes and to shape the future. For some, who read widely, the values of mutualism represented altruism rather than selfishness, the direction in which human society was evolving.<sup>12</sup>

The possibility of creating a discourse which asserted a link between moral evolution and the rise of labour accompanied the immigrants of the 1870s. They also brought with them a concept of ‘working men’ or ‘labour’; but these concepts were not without ambiguities, and those ambiguities both reflected and helped shape the labour process and the conception of class. There were differences of opinion, as there had been among the Chartists in Britain, about the distinctions between producers and idlers, workers and profiteers, working and middle classes, parasites and the industrious. Within these polarities men struggled to articulate a sense of identity as well as a programme of political demands, but logical and tactical imperatives shape the development of political movements. If the Chartists had spoken across the gaggle of competing positions—Owenism, unionism, mutual aid, Luddism, Ricardian socialism—to forge a new basis for unity based on the notion that everyone had property in their own labour, it needs to be said that they presupposed the social relations of possessive individualism and by 1900 presumed—as we saw in Chapter 4—that only men belonged to the ranks of ‘the workers’.

One other ambiguity needs noting. Working men had different views of competition. Owen, the apostle of co-operation, had adopted the most extreme position, but many of his followers accepted competition and only wanted force eliminated from exchange. The radicalism of the pre-1820 period tended to juxtapose competition to monopoly, and even in the 1870s those who accepted the teachings of political economy could still articulate their radicalism in these terms. Monopoly, after all, meant privilege, and in the context of Great Britain it usually meant English privilege. Scots knew this instinctively. Those influenced by Owen and co-operation tended, by contrast, to juxtapose competition and community. For such people the contrast between competition and association provided an important

intermediate stage. ‘This notion of competition as an *unnatural* force which imposed itself upon men from the outside ... could easily accommodate ... the trade unionist’s perception of good masters reluctantly having to follow bad in lowering wages ....’ It also accommodated the radical’s view that oppression and corruption were alien intrusions into a harmonious natural order and created space for the growth of the idea that a ‘competitive system’, capitalism, inevitably forced down wages, pauperised working men and their families, and debased labour. Solutions were equally varied. They ranged from Owen’s scientific assault on ‘false consciousness’, to be achieved by education, through attacks on ‘Old Corruption’ and ‘Kingcraft ... and Priestcraft’, to calls for the rise of ‘the working classes’.<sup>13</sup>

The prevalence of these attitudes confirms some aspects of Miles Fairburn’s brilliant anatomy of colonial society as ‘bondless’ and ‘atomised’, but contradicts others. Although Fairburn ignored the important role of journeymen and masters in shaping the “‘Insider’s View” of New Zealand as an Ideal Society’, a view centred on a belief in the colony’s ‘naturally abundant resources and a minimal framework of associations’, there is no fundamental disagreement between his ‘Insider’s View’ and the beliefs of the skilled immigrants who settled Caversham. The skilled brought these beliefs with them and established a society locally which conforms to Fairburn’s model in three senses: they enjoyed considerable opportunities for winning an ‘independency’, minimal formal associations, and a high level of local self-government. It is not clear, however, that they left behind their belief in mutualism and co-operation either during the voyage or because of their experience in the New World. In a small and face-to-face society like Caversham in the 1870s people expressed their faith in mutualism and co-operation in informal ways, institutions being relatively unnecessary. That soon changed. Nor is it clear, despite Fairburn’s eloquence, that they suffered intolerable levels of loneliness, drunkenness and violence, although increasing numbers came to view drunkenness as a problem in the 1890s. As this chapter will make clear, by 1890 a majority believed that only through political action as a class could they stop the colony from being destroyed by a greedy and selfish ‘hierarchy’ which lived on the fruits of ‘sweated’ labour. High levels of transience did not prevent this from happening; rather, immigrants from Britain quickened the

process and the level of emigration across the Tasman became a political scandal.

Fairburn might well respond that Caversham and the The Flat are not New Zealand, and that is one point being made in this chapter. He devoted considerable attention to disproving ‘the Olssen thesis’, however, and denied that sufficient evidence existed to talk of a working-class subculture.<sup>14</sup> He recognised the issue as central to his argument. It is true that the article which Fairburn attacked, published in 1974, suggested that a subculture existed without providing much evidence other than Sam Lister’s *Otago Workman*.<sup>15</sup> The previous chapters document more thoroughly the existence of a subculture rooted in the dominance of the handicraft mode of production and the strong preference for all work to be organised and done by independent artisans. The aversion to piece work and subcontracting proves that preference; so does the belief in apprentice-based crafts, the standard rate and the dignity of labour. Given the predominance of skilled immigrants who settled in Caversham, the emergence of such a subculture may have been inevitable. What was not inevitable was the way in which men then mobilised for political action and constructed an ideology centred on the values of the handicraft trades. Nor was it inevitable, given men’s success in maintaining a gendered division of labour (partly by abolishing piecework and subcontracting), that women would construct a distinctive political programme centred on the home. The relationship between the new meanings of work and home was symbiotic. The level of tension in any household probably depended on the couple.

## II

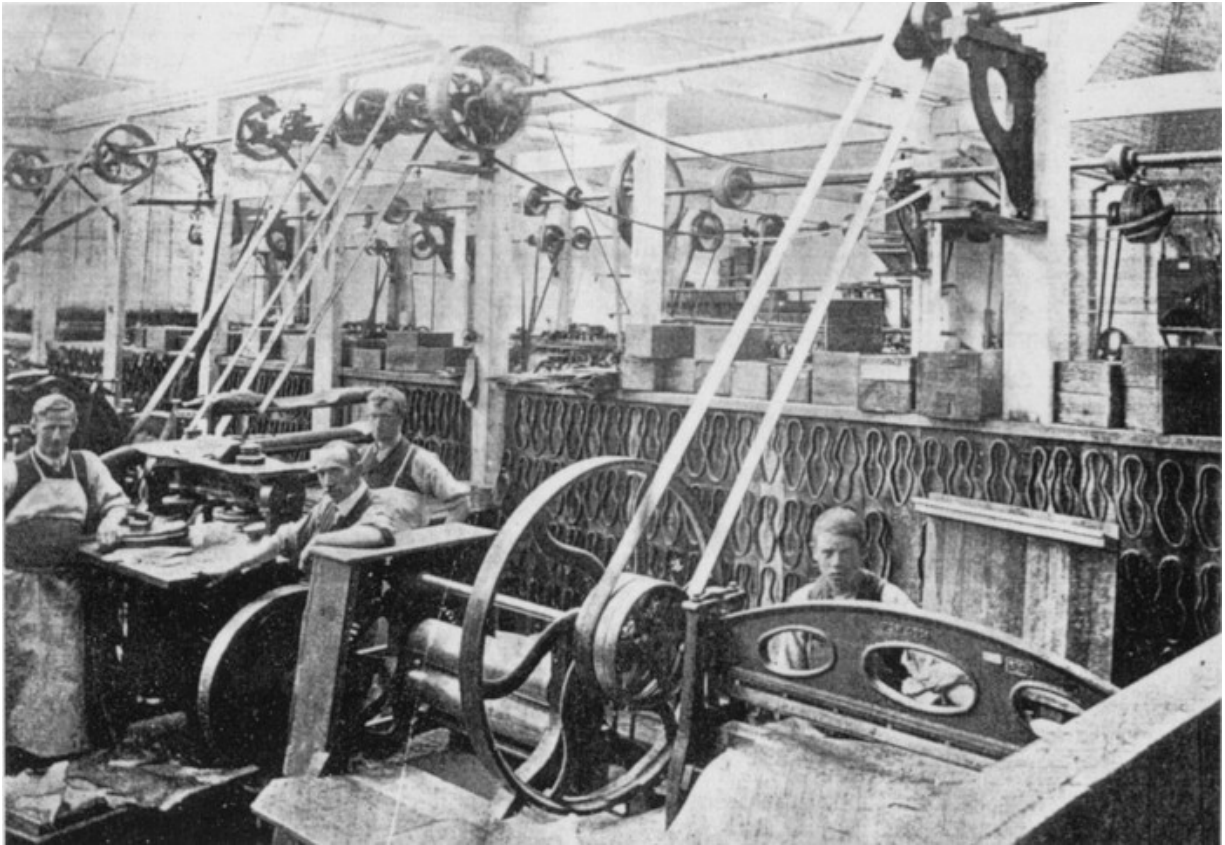
The ‘Long Depression’ in Otago, which lasted from 1879 until 1896, dealt harshly with working men and masters and began the process of politicising them. ‘Oh! we make rights for ourselves in this country’, one working man told a visiting English gentleman, and events now threatened them (that gentleman left in disgust when he discovered that people took offence when he spoke of a ‘lower class’).<sup>16</sup> The unskilled suffered more than the skilled from unemployment, but the skilled suffered, and many set up on their own account. Small masters and self-employed tradesmen also suffered as

competition intensified. There is no measure of bankruptcy for Caversham, but in Dunedin and Otago the rate soared.<sup>17</sup> As we have seen, most masters struggled desperately to avoid bankruptcy. Although Professor Gary Hawke has argued that no depression occurred, unemployment rose, the ‘Exodus’ to Victoria became a matter of widespread concern, and Dunedin actually lost population between 1881 and 1885.<sup>18</sup> The very process of colonisation had not only stalled but seemed in danger of going into reverse. This played upon the deepest fears of men and women who had crossed stormy oceans to better their lot while contributing to the great moral enterprise of founding a new society and civilising the wilderness. In the colony ‘depression’ acquired new meanings.

In Dunedin the ‘Long Depression’ coincided with the arrival of the modern factory, the most dramatic outcome of the first industrial revolution. The second industrial revolution followed hard on its heels. Contemporaries rarely distinguished the two revolutions, but the concept of an industrial revolution, still used for analysis, was coined in the nineteenth century—along with such other concepts as social class—to describe the momentous changes wrought.<sup>19</sup> Skilled men delighted in technological progress, especially when their own skills contributed, but they came to believe that the process of industrialisation threatened their skill, their control of the labour process, and opportunities for self-employment. Locomotives and steamships, powered by ever-improving engines and turbines, helped create larger markets and made still larger economies of scale possible. In some industries the factory replaced the workshop, new machines made older skills redundant, and work once done by skilled men could be performed by unskilled men, boys, women or even the Chinese. Such changes occurred. Because women had always played a large part in the manufacture of clothing the transformation of the industry in the 1880s did not occasion widespread concern among male workers, other than tailors. In the late eighties the problem came to be seen as more general. As the Sweating Commission reported, in several industries ‘the division of labour and the use of machinery have led to the employment of a larger number of youths and girls’. Thereafter the belief that mechanisation diluted skill became a staple for government officials and many skilled workers. ‘Modern machinery’, as one man noted, ‘eventually will do away with the Craftsman

and replace him by the Machinist.’<sup>[20](#)</sup>

The belief that industrialisation entailed more and more factories, mechanisation, and the dilution of skill became an undisputed staple of political economy in the late nineteenth century. The works of John Ruskin and William Morris popularised the view. In Dunedin bootmaking became a metaphor for the industrial transformation of society, the exaltation of monetary over human values, and the degradation of the skill and human dignity of male artisans. The history of the Dunedin industry, well known then and the subject of more union histories than any other trade, warrants a brief re-telling. When journeymen bootmakers gathered in the European Hotel to launch their first trade union in 1874, ‘Their object... was to assist each other by unity [to earn enough to look after their own welfare], and carry on their principle of harmony with the masters, who would ever be welcomed at their meetings’.<sup>[21](#)</sup> In this period unions rarely survived the occasion of their formation and the various bootmakers’ unions which followed each other in quick succession existed largely to resist wage cuts and deplore the introduction of Chinese labour. In the early 1880s strikes, fining ‘scabs’, rescinding fines and calling off strikes dominated the minutes. By 1885, however, the extent to which new and larger firms, such as Percy Sargood’s model factory, had introduced new technologies which allowed boys to be substituted for journeymen persuaded the union to accept a wage cut in return for a limitation on the number of boys per journeyman.<sup>[22](#)</sup>



*Rows of shoe knives line the wall and the clickers pose by their mechanised presses (specialised presses existed to cut the different parts of the shoe or boot). In large factories (such as this one) there were twelve specialist positions in the clicking department, between ten and twenty-four each in the machine, stitching, rough-stuff, benching, plumbing and finishing departments, and six in cleaning. By 1921, when the ODT published a fulsome account of the mechanisation of bootmaking (25 Nov. 1921), almost all tasks were done by machines. AJHR, 1910, H-11, pp. xxv.*

Local success for the union put local employers at a competitive disadvantage outside Dunedin. In 1888 the various bootmakers' unions federated to solve this problem, but without success. The employers followed suit in 1889 and promptly set out to cut wages and increase the ratio of boys to skilled men. The finishers enjoyed the best wages and controlled the union. Not only did piece rates allow them to do well but they 'were always in charge of boys coming into the trade, with the result that there were fewer boys learning the finishing than any other branch of the trade'.<sup>23</sup> The employers kept up their assault in an effort to win the fruits of mechanisation. Whatever the stress, finishers drew the line at including rough-stuff cutters, machinists (often women) or fitters (mostly women or boys). When the Sweating Commission visited Dunedin the bootmakers poured forth, led by their secretary, Henry Rodda (who lived in

Mornington but was active in Caversham). Bootmaker after bootmaker denounced 'the boy problem'. Later in the year they successfully organised a Bootmachinists Union.<sup>24</sup>

The transformation of bootmaking served as a warning to all skilled men, even as the partial successes of the Bootmakers heralded union as a defence against dilution. In many industries, such as bootmaking, different but interdependent crafts coexisted. In others, notably those created or transformed by the first industrial revolution, each craftsman needed the help of a relatively skilful labourer. If different branches of a trade warred, then the employers faced no opposition and could often bring the cheaper workers on to the more expensive work. Any technological change which mechanised part of the craftsman's work only simplified the process. In the 1880s the various crafts in most industries tried to unify. In industries such as bootmaking, however, the belief that skilled men should be paid a standard rate for the job, that 'custom' established a rate sufficient to look after their own welfare, and that it should not vary with fluctuations of the business cycle or from firm to firm simplified the search for unity among the journeymen.

In a sense this set of beliefs constituted the journeyman's version of the moral economy—an economic order which rewarded industry and honesty while penalising the lazy, the thriftless and the feckless. The articulation of this link between the moral and economic orders—a link long central in British and American culture—also armed the skilled with the conviction that the disruption of this moral economy, in which journeymen received a rate for the job, could most readily be explained in terms of the greed and selfishness of Capital. If not resisted, Capital's greed bred Monopoly and Monopoly spawned Tyranny. This line of analysis, resting as it did on a secure base of Protestant theology and bourgeois economic analysis, transposed Paine's political philosophy into the key of economic theory and linked both to a moral stance which condemned greed and arbitrary power. The word monopoly, in short, fused moral, political and economic considerations. The conflation confused analysis but armed both anger and indignation. The usurpation and monopolisation of property, rather than a particular form of production, created oppression and destitution. Monopolies in land attracted the most vehement denunciation. Within the

framework of Ricardo's political economy, even as adapted by early socialists, moderate profit could be justified as the wages of supervision and knowledge, but rent and interest were the product of no labour, and no natural right could justify them.<sup>[25](#)</sup>

The experience of bootmakers in the 1880s dramatised the threat which mechanisation and the growth of factory production posed, not just to skill but to this democratic community. Immigrants from northern England arrived knowing that the handloom weavers had been an earlier example. The growth of factory production threatened few other Dunedin trades at this time but the depression faced most skilled men with the threat of lower wages, longer hours, 'driving' and displacement by less skilled workers. Masters faced unscrupulous competition from desperate journeymen who set up on their own account. The case of the bootmakers provided a paradigm, in short, of what might happen. Skilled workers took note. Small things assumed significance when seen in the light of the bootmakers' experience. Factory-made furniture—taken over by the Chinese in neighbouring Victoria—took work from joiners, thus arming fear of job loss with racial menace. Stonemasons also struggled as concrete became more readily available. If Dunedin's trades were not gravely threatened the same could not be said for those in smaller towns. As the great Otago radical, Robert Stout, remarked, 'The village shoemaker and tailor have to give way to the town factory. The settler can get his clothing and his boots cheaper in the centres of population and better made; and, at the same time, the workers can be better paid as specialisation in work and machinery has made production easier and cheaper.'<sup>[26](#)</sup>



*The belief that God created the land and the animals for all of his people, and not just the rich, had become a widespread popular attitude by the 1880s. This picture from the Weekly Herald (1909) reveals the way in which biblical stories were rewritten to legitimise radical views and the on-going importance of this powerful viewpoint, even among those who called themselves socialists.*

Some journeymen and masters, like Stout, saw this process as integral to the progress of civilisation, but others still suspected greed and began to inveigh against not Capital but capitalism. Even when they stressed that capitalist ownership of machinery caused excessive competition, most still

believed that ‘the usurpation of their natural rights to cultivate the soil’ had made them vulnerable to capitalist exploitation.<sup>27</sup>

It goes without saying that various forms of Protestantism fed this moral repudiation of unrestrained capitalism as the embodiment of selfishness, greed and unbrotherly behaviour. Every critic in the colony, like those elsewhere in the English-speaking world, echoed the cadences of the King James Bible. The more influential critics, especially Henry George, whose *Progress and Poverty* created an international sensation almost from its publication in 1879, skilfully drew on their Protestant heritage to indict a civilisation whose progress seemed to sharpen the gap between rich and poor. During the ‘Long Depression’ this paradox of progress generating poverty puzzled more and more people, conservative and liberal. Many agreed with George that private ownership of land was the key to the paradox even though relatively few shared his faith in the ‘single tax’ on the ‘unearned increment’—that proportion of the land’s value which reflected social progress rather than individual investment—as the solution to all problems. J. S. Mill, who coined the phrase ‘unearned increment’, complained that landlords ‘grow rich in their sleep, without working ...’. Mill and George both believed—as did skilled workers—that work was the only source of a right to property. This doctrine justified the expropriation of lands owned by absentees and ‘waste lands’ (whether Maori or Pakeha). The availability of ‘waste lands’, and few Pakeha doubted their availability in New Zealand, meant that the development of industrial capitalism was neither inevitable nor irreversible.<sup>28</sup>

Many workers believed that the monopolies in land established by the ‘squatters’ and ‘wool kings’ constituted the source of their problems and an unfortunate example to greedy capitalists. During the ‘Long Depression’ attention focused on the colony’s runholders as a new species of tyrant. Land also figured because artisans strongly believed that everybody should be able to own enough land to secure their independence. The idea had subsistence overtones and domestic gardens became increasingly common but it also reflected a belief that manhood could be guaranteed only by economic independence. The idea arrived with the immigrants. Scots and Irish hated ‘landlordism’ and the last of the Highland clearances figured largely in colonial newspapers during the 1880s. But English migrants,

heirs to William Cobbett, had no need of Celtic examples. The ideals of ‘the cottage economy’ flourished here and had been largely realised before the depression. Bracken sang of just this world, of the triumph of Freedom and Right in the New World, of a world of independent owners and craftsmen, their wives free from the need to sell their labour, living in love and harmony.<sup>[29](#)</sup>



*Thomas Bracken lived in Mornington but was the most famous member of Unity Lodge—‘the workingman’s lodge’—on Cargill Road. As an MHR (1881–84), journalist and poet he championed the views of ‘the people’. Born in 1843 in County Meath, Ireland, he embodied the experience of The Flat’s working men, having been an apprentice to a chemist, a shearer and a station hand. He was also, at different times, a Protestant, a mason and a Catholic. His poetry was enormously popular both because he voiced widely held views and because of his nationalism. ‘God Defend New Zealand’ is now our national anthem but others are still sung, notably ‘Not Understood’, a cry for tolerance (from Flowers of the Free Land, 1877), a sort of unofficial anthem for the Independent Oddfellows. Hocken Library.*

### III

In the mid-1880s a few among Caversham’s skilled debated the direction of modern society and how best to confront the threat to a social order which they had helped to establish. Charles Thorn, Caversham’s most successful

master carpenter and joiner, played a key role in propounding unity and self-improvement.<sup>30</sup> Both strategies had deep roots in mid-Victorian Britain. Thorn had a deep faith in the dignity of labour, especially skilled labour, but believed that working men would obtain their rightful place in society only by 'raising ourselves in the social scale' through education and temperance. Thorn's Primitive Methodism shaped his faith, but in Caversham and in Dunedin that message struck deep roots. Nor was he preaching false gospels. Literacy and knowledge, useful in many skilled trades and essential in some, were indispensable to full legal, political and social equality, or, in a word, citizenship.<sup>31</sup> Although temperance has long been scorned by historians as a 'middle-class ideology', the Baptists and Methodists saw drunkenness as the besetting danger in the colony. Here (as in northern England) 'militant temperance or teetotalism ... [was] virtually a necessary article in the radical's creed'. In the first licensing poll in 1881 few agreed, but their numbers grew steadily and local option, a demand of English radicals, was the law here.<sup>32</sup>

Thorn also saw union as a means to mutual aid and self-improvement. For him, proud Primitive and member of the ASC&J, chapel and union embodied his faith in Christian brotherhood. When he spoke of labour, however, he usually meant the skilled journeyman, the master and the skilful helper. He does not seem to have had in mind navvies, shearers or wharf lumpers. Thorn minted good works from his faith. In 1879 he supported Sir George Grey's attempt to cast colonial politics on an ideological basis and in 1881, having organised the ASC&J, he took the lead in forming the Otago Trades and Labour Council (T&LC) and a Caversham branch. He aimed to further labour's legitimate interests in colonial politics 'and advance the social and moral condition of their class'. Restoration of the eight-hour day and the need to restrict immigration dominated discussion; the Council pledged its support to all parliamentary candidates who accepted these planks.<sup>33</sup> Over the next three years the T&LC elaborated a more comprehensive radical agenda shaped by a vision of a more just and equal society. The abolition of plural voting (i.e. the property franchise), the introduction of an elected upper house (instead of the appointed Legislative Council with its life members), no more sales of Crown land, and a tax on freehold land featured. The Council also urged

that trades should not be taught to prisoners, the cessation of Chinese immigration, the introduction of technical education, enactment of employers' liability and encouragement for local industry. The T&LC enjoyed considerable success in the 1881 elections but the failure of the radicals to do anything to solve the depression ensured their failure in the 1884 elections.<sup>34</sup>

The 1885 colonial conference of unionists, chaired by Thorn, repeated the same refrains. As president of the Otago T&LC, Thorn had felt increasingly hampered by the lack of a national organisation to 'promote the better organisation of the working classes [and obtain] a proper representation of labour in the Legislature of the Colony'. 'In my opinion', he told the delegates (some forty men who represented roughly 2,500 unionists), 'the people are too apathetic, and lose sight of the main objects that should govern a nation .... Therefore, to do our duty to the State and to ourselves we must be united.'<sup>35</sup> After Thorn's keynote address the delegates debated several issues. The proponents of protection and the single tax aired the relative merits of these reforms. The engineers and bootmakers strongly supported protection, but the gospel of free trade, so central to British Liberalism, had its champions. Neither Thorn nor Robert Rutherford, who represented the Caversham branch of the T&LC, spoke on the issue, although Thorn pointed out that tariffs would increase prices (carpenters, as a rule, opposed protection and strongly supported land reform). Henry Hogg, speaking for the Tailors, protested about 'sweating' in the dressmaking industry, claiming that the exploited women 'are ... totally unfitting themselves to fulfil that place in society for which Nature destined them'. Stout also addressed the conference on the Victorian experience of sweating and the success of protection in eradicating the evil. Henry Rodda proposed that 'the sweating system be prevented' by law. Few agreed with him. Late in their deliberations the delegates voted that all disputes should be solved by arbitration. One delegate claimed that this demonstrated 'the great advance made in intelligence by the working classes'.<sup>36</sup> The conference ended when delegates and 600 local unionists, including forty proud members of the ASC&J, marched to Garrison Hall—fifteen minutes' walk from Kensington—to unanimously confirm their support for the eight-hour day, a land tax and the abolition of plural voting. The meeting voted

for protection, too, but some opposed and many abstained. Thorn's motion urging working men to form unions in order to secure 'proper representation' passed without dissent. Only apathy could stop them, he said, but blamed geographic mobility for the problem. The city's mayor presided.<sup>37</sup>



*The First New Zealand Trades Congress, 1885. (Back row, left to right): A. G. Howland, P. M. Gough, G. Millar, H. Hogg, W. H. Farnell, T. Dodson, C. Bradley, D. Bellhouse, W. T. Barnes, G. Kimber, G. F. Dodds. (Middle row): J. Walker, R. Rutherford, R. Ferguson, E. Wilson, T. C. Farnie, C. J. Thorn (president of the Otago T&LC), R. Harvey, J. Aris, J. Rae, A. McLaren. (Front row): W. Holgate, W. G. Wells, A. Gardner, T. Tudehope, H. Rodda, G. Watt, W. Marshall, R. M. Griffiths. Hocken Library.*

Thorn typified the activists in labour politics of this period. Most of them, as a later unionist pointed out, were master tradesmen or hotelkeepers.<sup>38</sup> Robert Rutherford, Caversham's photographer, who had just given up the trade for the sake of his health, now worked as a bookkeeper (he later founded the Wax Vesta Company). He had been Caversham's first mayor. J. Wells, who represented the Caversham T&LC at some sessions, lived in the St Clair Hotel in 1885 but the *Directory* gave no occupation. In 1890 he had a house in St Clair but was listed as an accountant and commission agent. Robert Stout, lawyer and politician, and erstwhile

representative for Caversham in the Provincial Council, also played a major role in articulating a vision of liberalism which embodied many of the key values of mutual aid and self-improvement. Analysis of the T&LC's officeholders shows that about half of them were masters and owned modest amounts of property. The other half, however, were journeymen. The leaders of the Typographers' and Bootmakers' Unions took an active part in trying to fashion a political strategy for coping with the twin threats of mechanisation and depression.<sup>39</sup>

Most skilled men ignored such efforts before 1886–87. Sir William Barron, a wealthy merchant and runholder who lived at Forbury Corner, represented Caversham electorate throughout the decade. Neither Thorn nor Rutherford contested his seat. Nor was this surprising. Parliament spent most of its time on issues relating to the development of the colony, and MHRs were not paid. The local borough, one which Rutherford served, had more power to grapple with local problems. Few belonged to unions and only 137 belonged to The Flat's six friendly societies. Given liberal land laws and a democratic franchise for men, most artisans wanted little else (although those in the metal trades demanded that all manufactured goods should be made locally).<sup>40</sup> Many, heirs to a powerful British tradition, saw the state as an instrument of oppression rather than redemption. Others still thought in terms of insurrection as the only means of achieving social change. As one union leader said, when rejecting Sir Harry Atkinson's proposal for National Insurance as a poll tax, free-born Englishmen had never tolerated such. He referred to Jack Straw and Watt Tyler (both the subject of popular plays at the time) and claimed that 'if this National Insurance scheme is introduced ... it will cause a resurrection too'. Henry Smith Fish, the colourful MHR for Dunedin South and a painter by trade, damned Atkinson's proposal because it would encourage improvidence.<sup>41</sup> Confusion and ambivalence characterised most thought about goals and methods. Yet all was about to change, even as the T&LC collapsed.



*Robert W. Rutherford Sr, a native of Scotland and Caversham Borough's first mayor and the founder of the Wax Vesta factory. He also served on the local school committee for many years. Photo by Reg Graham from Cyclopaedia.*

#### IV

By the mid-eighties demoralisation and division threatened the skilled, both on The Flat and elsewhere. The depression deepened. Employers—even those who disliked it—sacked skilled men and replaced them with boys and women. Thousands left for prosperous Victoria. In times of social disorder competing nostrums and symbolic languages proliferate and contend. Throughout the English-speaking world men and women fashioned new ideas and strategies. On the local stage, temperance, Bible in schools, early closing and the friendly societies all had their champions. So did theosophy and social reform (one of the colony's most colourful Theosophists lived in

St Clair). In this climate Thorn's idea of union had to compete in the jostle of panaceas. Not surprisingly, given the importance of manufacturing in Caversham, tariff protection for local industries suddenly began attracting widespread support (the T&LC and many of Dunedin's radicals had proposed this without noticeable success in the elections of 1881 and 1884). The proposal preserved the unity of masters and men and seemed to offer a solution to the 'Long Depression', albeit a solution that would not only protect the wages and conditions of the skilled but develop the colony (the main aim of almost every colonist), curtail Capital's greed, and prevent the tendency towards Monopoly.

In 1886–87, branches of the Protection League sprouted throughout the colony's towns and in all Dunedin's industrial suburbs. The Caversham branch elected Robert Rutherford its president. He believed that 'the landlord and the moneylender keep the people in bondage'.<sup>42</sup> Throughout the city masters and journeymen insisted that this simple reform, by ending unfair competition from countries with cheaper labour, would chase away the depression, stop the 'Exodus' to Melbourne, and thus end wage cutting, unemployment and poverty. The idea that New Zealand could be self-sufficient, urged by masters and men in manufacturing since the late 1870s, won wide support. The *Otago Workman*, The Flat's fledgling radical weekly, strongly supported protection and criticised importers who fattened on goods manufactured by the 'starving hordes of Europe'.<sup>43</sup> Sam Lister, the owner and editor of the *Workman*, chaired a meeting to recruit members for a South Dunedin branch of the League (the two boroughs were quite parochial). Thomas Bracken, radical, nationalist, poet and ex-politician, walked down the hill from Mornington to address the meeting. Rutherford spoke too, criticising the selfishness of freetraders and arguing that MHRs should serve for the honour of being true patriots. After the meeting many joined the new South Dunedin branch of the League.<sup>44</sup>

In 1887 Sir Julius Vogel, the Treasurer in Sir Robert Stout's Ministry, provided an increased tariff in his financial statement but it did not go far enough for the League. Vogel justified his modest increase in terms of the government's need for more revenue. William Hutchison, president of the Otago League, damned it as inadequate to achieve the Protectionists' goal of 'nobody very poor and nobody very rich'.<sup>45</sup> The House of

Representatives also rejected Vogel's financial statement and writs were issued for a general election. The debate over the merits of protection and free trade became fierce. By September the Otago League boasted over a thousand members. The League established its own paper, the *Budget*, and endorsed six candidates, including Rutherford for Caversham.<sup>46</sup>

In Caversham and South Dunedin the 1887 election saw a record registration of electors and a record turnout. Barron's hostility to protection, and the fact that he had voted against an eight-hour-day bill, saw Rutherford finally enter the lists. The borough council convened a meeting, ostensibly to discuss its own financial position, but Rutherford successfully moved that the colony needed simpler government, tariff protection for local industries and a graduated income tax to 'reduce aristocrats to working for themselves'. He strongly believed in the biblical injunction, 'Unless you work neither shall you eat'. One speaker called for the direct representation of 'labour' and another compared Barron's affluence with the miserable circumstances of the poor. The meeting established a Caversham Labour Representation Committee, the first in the colony, to select a candidate. Warner, of the ASC&J, and Hugh Gourlay master of Donaghy's and the Iron Rolling Mills, both belonged.<sup>47</sup> Barron declared his independence from the Stout-Vogel Ministry and held Caversham easily with just over 60 per cent of the vote. Given the nature of politics in urban areas during the 1880s it is significant that Rutherford polled so strongly.<sup>48</sup>

The campaign for a protective tariff gathered momentum in 1888 as the various branches debated the detailed nature of their demands and brought pressure to bear on Sir Harry Atkinson's new 'Scarecrow Ministry'. The main justification for protection remained the same, as the *Otago Workman* pointed out: 'Protection or Freetrade means either work for our people or charity soup in the winter ...'. Lister also portrayed it as a 'battle between foreign monopolists and local industries', an idea which neatly built upon the long-standing colonial hostility towards absentee landowners, those who reaped but did not sow.<sup>49</sup> The new ministry bent with the protectionist wind and the *Workman* declared it 'the first time that wealth has failed to dominate in our Parliament'.<sup>50</sup> Barron voted against the Atkinson tariff, which passed, and the League declared 5 July New Zealand's day of industrial independence. Triumphant banquets took place in the main towns.

The new tariff failed to dispel the depression, however, and the League and its branches collapsed quite quickly. Some of the leaders tried to keep the organisation going and announced new goals, notably a progressive tax on land and income, but they won little support. The branches in South Dunedin and Caversham collapsed and in 1889 only twelve men attended the Otago League's annual general meeting. By then the torch of reform had passed into new hands, although the agitation had lent weight to the local campaign to shop and bank locally.<sup>51</sup>



*Caversham township on the eve of the great upheaval of 1888–90. Muir and Moodie reissued this photograph by the Burton Brothers, whose firm they bought. It was taken from Rockside, probably c. 1886, at the height of the Protection League's activities. The township is in the centre, the Main South Road running from left to right. The small industries in the area strongly supported protection. Museum of New Zealand.*



*Kensington on the eve of the great upheaval. Hillside Road runs at right angles to the railway and meets Cargill Road at Ogg's Corner. The cottages belong to the workshop's workers. Burton Brothers, Museum of New Zealand.*

Boyd's analysis of the membership of the Protection League in Dunedin demonstrates the unity of masters and journeymen. Almost half of the members and most of the leaders were master tradesmen, men like Rutherford and Lister. Skilled journeymen and larger employers provided about 12 per cent of the membership each while the unskilled and semi-skilled between them contributed a little more than 10 per cent. The 150 men who can be traced practised seventy-seven different trades. Bootmakers, carpenters, tailors and cabinetmakers were the trades most heavily represented.<sup>52</sup> Few of the activists, however, were prominent in the fledgling union movement. In mobilising hundreds of workers into 'the strongest association of a political character that had ever had existence in Otago', and articulating the idea that the colony could be self-sufficient in manufactured goods, the Protection League forged an enduring legacy. Over the next generation the union movement on The Flat accepted protection as its gospel, but it only accepted what 'the people' of Caversham had long wanted.<sup>53</sup>

In 1887 Sam Lister published the first issue of the *Otago Workman* and began a revolution. Lister, as we noted earlier, had broken with the 'auld kirk, the cold kirk, the kirk without the people', and now preached atheism, anti-clericalism, republicanism, brotherhood and democracy. The traditions of artisan radicalism had found their tempestuous local champion. Lister hit out at the rich and the powerful. He attacked Dunedin's business elites, accusing them of hypocrisy and callousness. He also aimed barbs at the colony's political leaders, especially Sir Robert Stout, who promised much and delivered little. Vincent Pyke, the great Victorian radical of the 1850s, received a drubbing when he complained that most of the unemployed did not want work. The churches and the clergy took the most savage blows. Lister especially detested prohibitionists, opponents of gambling and those who wanted to outlaw boxing. The governor-general and the royal family also took their turn. The paper's anonymous columnists, 'The Chiseler' and 'Any Sneaker', wittily mocked those whom the editor berated.<sup>54</sup> No target was too sacred. The Queen, 'The Chiseler' wrote on one occasion, is stingy. Whereas a respectable man would proudly support his family out of his 'regular fair screw and all his overtime not so our Sovereign lady the Queen, who has a Divine Patent Right, which was stolen some two centuries ago, whereby she is empowered to fleece her loving subjects'.<sup>55</sup> On another occasion he described her as a 'fat, podgy, over-fed old woman'. Lister loved to shock, but his belief that wealth and hypocrisy went hand in hand struck responsive chords. So did his manly forthrightness. He did so well that he bought handsome brick premises for his business on Hillside Road in Kensington. By 1890 he claimed an extensive inter-colonial circulation. One correspondent claimed that the paper sold 4,000 in Dunedin each week, more than any daily did in a day.<sup>56</sup>

From the beginning Lister talked of the need for a 'labour party' to protect the rights of labour 'against the selfish greed, and tyranny of unscrupulous Capital'. 'We do not object to, or rail against Capital, but we insist upon the toilers getting an honest, fair share of the results of their labour, so that they can live in decent comfort ....' No fair-minded master could take alarm at such a gospel. When the Protection League collapsed, Lister lamented the 'apathy displayed by working men ... each one thinking and acting as if it did not concern him ...'. Education became his main

hope. Like so many artisans from Edinburgh and London, he instinctively saw 'the state' as an instrument of 'Old Corruption'.<sup>57</sup> If it now seems strange that anybody could have expected a reform long considered devoid of ideological purpose likely to contribute to, let alone realise, the triumph of Equality, then that strangeness measures the distance still to be travelled before a coherent social-democratic ideology had been fashioned. Lister, proud master printer, lived close to some of the most crowded streets on The Flat and saw still more congested areas, with their brothels and sly-grog shops, each day as he walked to his offices. He feared a world in which people lost independence and self-respect, a world in which people depended upon the state. Education, the key to self-improvement, marked the path forward.<sup>58</sup>

In 1889 Lister became more emphatic about the need for trade unions, while lamenting that 'the wish for combination is lacking ...'.<sup>59</sup> In this he both encouraged and reflected a dramatic growth in support for unionism. An upturn in the local economy, symbolised and driven by the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition, which opened in 1889, may have contributed by persuading men that the worst was over. By the winter of 1890 Dunedin's unionists numbered five or six thousand.<sup>60</sup> The enthusiasm for union, however, reflected the success of unionism more than any upturn in the economy. The triumph of the Seamen's Union, based in Port Chalmers, in defeating the Northern Steam Ship Company's attempt to cut wages, not to mention two resounding union victories in London, provided the principal spur to growth. The London dockers, 'the poorest of the working classes', 'opened men's eyes to the necessity of trying to protect themselves'.<sup>61</sup> The Bootmakers sent £25, the Seamen £200, and other unions pledged support.<sup>62</sup> Lister cheered the triumph of London's dockers as 'the first move of the Revolution'. He now spoke of 'When Socialism gets power (without saying what he meant by socialism, although it implied an end to Capital's reign).'<sup>63</sup>

Lister recognised that the exclusiveness of trade unionism undermined the position of the skilled men who belonged. After the London dock strike he harped on the point. Trade unions, in refusing to help the weak, had been served right. Women had to be organised, but so too did the unskilled labourers within craft industries. He complimented the Knights of Labour

on their policy of equal pay for equal work and their commitment to organising all workers on an industrial rather than a craft basis.<sup>64</sup> The formation of the Maritime Council in October 1889 gave a powerful fillip to the unionisation of the unskilled. Not to be outdone, late in 1889 the non-maritime unions, led by three unionists from Caversham and a prominent member of the Bootmakers, David Pinkerton, reformed the Trades and Labour Council.<sup>65</sup> By August 1890 the T&LC boasted some 3,000 affiliates and two months later 5,415. The Maritime Council also claimed about 2,000 members locally, including a 'Railway Employees' Association' which had over 500 members in Dunedin (including the 200 men at Hillside).<sup>66</sup> Lister celebrated. By presenting a trenchant class interpretation of colonial society he also encouraged men and women to think of a still larger unity of labour based on the moral principles of brotherhood and co-operation. Although he favoured equal pay for equal work, he believed, like most artisans, that equal pay would prevent women from competing for men's jobs and end the danger of women spearheading dilution. No employer would hire a woman if she had to be paid a man's wage.

The ferment affected all crafts (although *Typo* spoke for an older tradition in opposing the 'new unionism' and the closed shop). Within the Bootmakers, now faced by united employers determined to reduce wages, the benchers and clickers overthrew the finishers. During the meeting to discuss the employers' demand a member moved that the union offer £2.2s a week, considerably less than finishers earned, and the motion passed. The union also insisted on a ratio of no more than one boy or woman to every three journeymen. The employers promptly accepted the offer. The finishers fought back but could not persuade the union to rescind its motion. The principle of exclusivity had been only partially modified, for the union refused to admit the unskilled helpers, boys, or women, let alone less skilled workers such as the rough-stuff cutters, machinists and fitters. In 1890, however, they helped organise the last two groups into a separate union.<sup>67</sup>



*David Pinkerton, probably c. 1900, when he was a member of the Legislative Council. He was born near Edinburgh in 1836, the son of a corn merchant, and received a parish education. Lured by news of the goldrushes, he arrived with his wife and members of her family in 1861. He worked as a bootmaker until he entered politics. He was a Forester and a member of the Free Thought Association. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

Fear usually persuaded skilled workers to organise men who might threaten their jobs, especially in a trade where new technologies threatened customary arrangements. Many masters also belonged to the union. David Pinkerton, the tolerant Scot who had emerged as a key figure in the Dunedin labour movement, had been a master as recently as 1885. In some organisations, such as the Bakers' Union, the masters provided the leadership.<sup>68</sup> Journeymen feared unemployment and masters feared competition from jobless journeymen setting up on their own account. When asked the cause of their trade's problems, however, both masters and men pointed to 'boy labour' and demanded no more than one apprentice to every four journeymen.<sup>69</sup> While fear forced the men of the skilled trades to

change their customary strategies of exclusion, a vision of brotherhood and co-operation also inspired some. The very idea of the ‘new unionism’ which swept the English-speaking world heralded this new altruistic spirit and invested unionism with a moral purpose, not only in uplifting labour but in advancing the evolution of the race. Brotherhood and co-operation had many sources in a society founded to escape the industrial revolution and the British class system. Primitive Methodists, Baptists, Wesleyans, not to mention different species of Oddfellows, Druids and Foresters, let alone such ‘faddist’ groups as the Theosophists, all stressed the centrality of brotherhood. Such a view nicely complemented the idea that women ought to marry and stay at home.<sup>70</sup>

Even that most conservative craft, the carpenters and joiners, responded to the new mood. Competition had reduced the trade to a ‘terrible condition’. The *Workman* reported in disbelief that desperate men had tendered to construct houses at less than cost. When masters and journeymen denounced the ‘competitive system’ they had in mind precisely this state of affairs. In 1889–90, however, little could be done but demand a Lien Act (which would make unpaid wages a secured liability on the assets of a bankrupt master). No issue concerned the union more. Lister called for a Lien Bill and even the Premier promised action.<sup>71</sup> Fish, the aggressively (and at times vulgar) champion of democratic values and the rights of the common man, took up the cause in Parliament and got an honorary membership of the union for his pains.<sup>72</sup>

Harry Warner, who settled in John Street after arriving from London, first articulated the ASC&J’s new political truculence. In 1889–90 the local branch protested about immigration, gave money to the Seamen’s Union during its battle with the Northern Steam Ship Company, boycotted shopkeepers who refused to close early, and congratulated their brothers in Chicago on winning the eight-hour day. In 1889 they refused to march as a union in the procession to open the Exhibition buildings ‘owing to the low rate of wages paid ...’. They added, at once, that as most of their members belonged to friendly societies they could participate anyway.<sup>73</sup> When the Maritime Council became locked in dispute with Whitcombes in 1890, Warner (and another ex-Londoner, W. H. Warren) asked its one member ‘to withdraw from the place where he is working ...’. During the Maritime

Strike, which exploded in the spring, this union of craftsmen levied themselves and donated more than £117 to the 'Strike Defence Fund'. Only the Bootmakers gave more.<sup>74</sup>

Long before the Maritime Strike the ASC&J also tried to create a greater unity within their trade. In June, Warner summoned the inaugural meeting of a Building Trades' Union in the city in an effort to end the fratricidal craft disputes of old. Emissaries proceeded north to preach the same gospel.<sup>75</sup> As part of an international union governed from Manchester, however, the local branch frequently had to take initiatives before knowing whether it had approval. The branch ran into the same problem when it decided to affiliate with the local T&LC, subject to approval from head office. Head office disapproved. By late 1890 discontent with this grew sharply and resolution followed resolution demanding the establishment of a district council in the colony.<sup>76</sup> The word finally came back from Manchester that the branch should deal with the problem of fratricidal competition by setting up a trades section for qualified men who wanted a lower subscription and fewer benefits. There is little evidence that the new scheme worked and Warner continued to agitate for an all-embracing union.

The railways best fused the new radicalism. The three commissioners who ran the state-owned railway system, charged with making it profitable, served notice in 1889 that they proposed to institute piece rates—widely regarded as a form of sweating—and eliminate the various pensions which the men enjoyed. Lister's *Workman*, not a block from Hillside, thundered against such tyranny and despotism. Surprised by the unanimous fury of the men, the commissioners backed off and offered a new form of compulsory insurance. Lister became still more splenetic and denounced it as 'the most monstrous proposal ever made'. Nor did he forget to denounce them for substituting boys for journeymen.<sup>77</sup> 'We hear a good deal of slavery ... in Russia', a Hillside worker wrote (under the pseudonym 'Justice'), 'but there is no need to go so far from home as there is plenty of Russia in Dunedin.'<sup>78</sup> In March the Dunedin branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants held its first meeting, elected officers and deputed them to give evidence before the Sweating Commission. In June Dunedin voted 604–1 to affiliate with the Maritime Council and 586–16 for 'extreme measures'. The mood of the men is nicely illustrated by one man who

refused to accept orders unless he received them in writing! When he was dismissed the national executive had to tell him he had no case, but the local branch remained very unhappy.<sup>79</sup>

In the winter of 1890 most journeymen and masters realised that they were involved in an historic attempt to readjust the balance between the rights of property and the 'Rights of Man'. Property had won the upper hand, they believed, and needed to be put in its place. Events enlarged but did not supersede this belief that property now menaced human rights and values. 'The Exodus', the popular name for the colony's loss of population, became a hotly debated issue. Imported papers expounded new diagnoses and solutions. One could buy William Lane's *Brisbane Worker*, the voice of democratic Australian socialism.<sup>80</sup> Two locally printed editions of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* (1888) sold out in weeks. In all the industrial suburbs and towns men poured into unions. Prominent merchants and union leaders from the city formed a Tailoresses' Union to outlaw subcontracting, and the Sweating Commission reported that where 'a union has been formed the condition of the operatives has improved, wages do not sink below a living minimum, and the hours of work are not excessive'.<sup>81</sup> Unions seemed to be capable of redeeming the New World from the ills of the Old. Even Old England was not immune from the contagion. A mood of impatient excitement was abroad.

On The Flat, Lister dramatised the key issues. In 1890 the police tried to shut his paper down on the grounds that it had not been registered. The posse left when Lister showed his registration papers.<sup>82</sup> The police next started harassing the *Workman's* runners and prosecuted Lister for printing a handbill without his printer's imprint. Stout, who had cancelled his subscription in a rage after Lister had exposed some of his business dealings, conducted the prosecution. The Court fined Lister £10 and £6.2s costs. Harry Warner of the Carpenters' Union addressed some 200 persons in Naumann's Hall, Cargill's Corner, to attack the arbitrary use of power and call for donations to pay Lister's fine. Hugh Gourlay, a very successful master, won two rounds of applause when he denounced police attempts to victimise Lister and described the intrepid editor as 'a firm advocate of the rights of the working classes'.<sup>83</sup> Lister's manly independence delighted the masters and journeymen generally. He embodied in his person their claim to

the 'Rights of Man' and their contempt for despots and hypocrites no less than distant aristocrats and monarchs.

## VI

When one of the colony's (and Dunedin's) largest firms, the Union Steam Ship Company, became embroiled in a dispute on the Sydney waterfront, the seamen and wharf lumpers at Port Chalmers, against the wishes of their own leaders, struck. The dispute spread rapidly throughout New Zealand as some of the Maritime Council's affiliates joined in. The skilled city unions did not strike, and nor did the local branch of the Railway Servants, but they became emotionally and financially involved. Men from the skilled trades, supported by radicals like Stout, organised a defence fund. Rodda and Warner from Caversham stood with the leaders.<sup>84</sup> Solemn meetings, concerts, and picketing mobilised support. One bootmaker, J. F. Hulbert, wrote the strikers' anthem, a popular song.<sup>85</sup> The strike heightened the sense of class consciousness that had been forged over the previous three years, sharpened the issues involved in the clash between Capital and Labour, and extended the sense of class among manual workers. Many working men saw themselves as the agents of the community's true interests. The more bookish saw labour as the instrument for moving society along its true evolutionary path towards a more altruistic or scientific stage. Many masters helped lead the march.

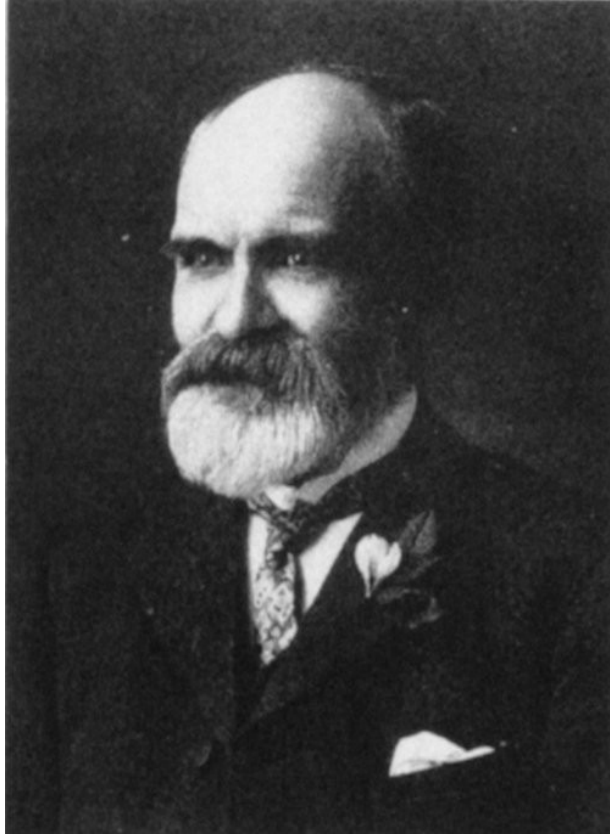
Lister's passionate millenarianism orchestrated emotions on The Flat. 'Even if our wives and families are brought to the verge of starvation, we must fight to the death, for defeat means death, and victory salvation.'<sup>86</sup> He reported the 'chaff' and the practical jokes from the picket lines. He named The Flat's first 'black-leg' and wrote a ballad, sung to the air of 'Yankee Doodle', to commemorate such infamy. When the workshops' manager sacked the president and secretary of the local ASRS, Lister roared: 'Their action has been insulting, tyrannical, and provoking'.<sup>87</sup> Lister had no illusions about the moral character of many working men, especially the unskilled, but described the strike as the vehicle which would transform even the most debauched into an impulse that would regenerate society. Among the skilled too, he claimed, the strike ended 'The miserable

distinctions of class and caste which have so long played the workers off against each other, and kept them bound in the chains of wages-slavery ...'. 'In Brotherhood alone can we find shelter. In being honest, sober, unselfish, alone can we find relief [and] win for all who live a life worth living.' Even some employers, Lister noted, supported the strike because they too were prisoners of 'the Competitive System'.<sup>88</sup> Lister's tone became more millenarian as defeat became inevitable. 'In short, it appears to be a preparation for the great battle of Armageddon long since predicted, and now about to come to pass. The sooner the better, so that the millennium may be ushered in, "When man to man, the world o'er, Shall brothers be and a' that"'.<sup>89</sup>

'What is the kernel of all this trouble? It is this alone; shall *Capital*, as it has hitherto done, rule the roost?' 'The Chiseler' prophesied that even if labour suffered defeat, 'it will soon recuperate, and after a time rise up like a lion refreshed. Capital will be compelled to take labour into partnership, and divide equally' Arbitration, he said, would provide a cure, a common refrain at this time (and one which doubtless reflected the centrality of voluntary arbitration in the British building and metal-working industries and the urgent hope that the strikers could salvage something from their struggle).<sup>90</sup> In mid-October, when the northern unions had capitulated, even the most hopeful realised that the strike had failed to usher in a new reign of justice. The prospect of defeat only heightened the sense of labour's dignity and the importance of affirming it in new ways. The leaders of the T&LC had decided before the strike that labour should seek to represent itself in Parliament. Lister's *Workman* had long since recognised the need to have working men represent working men. In June, before the strike, Lister lamented that, of all the candidates likely to offer themselves, only Fish was acceptable.<sup>91</sup> Yet Lister still had a very limited notion of the state's potential role; his desire for a labour presence was mainly defensive and his enthusiasm for slashing public spending led him to support the Financial Reform Association.<sup>92</sup> The strike and the growing prospect of defeat made an attempt to win some political influence more important, especially when the Union Steam Ship Company, driven to the negotiating table by public pressure to seek a peaceful end to the dispute, soon walked out while the government did nothing. As one prominent member of the Seamen's Union

later recalled, 'We were licked—and licked, and it must be added that we were also kicked and kicked very hard indeed.... There was no bargaining about terms.'<sup>93</sup>

Labour's leaders now stressed the importance of maintaining a respectable image; this, they thought, was the key to public influence. Unions banned alcohol at meetings. Many ceased meeting in pubs. During the strike, union leaders encouraged their supporters to stay sober and obey the law. 'When a man now came to his union drunk he was called to order very soon and punished and if the offence was repeated he was expelled....'<sup>94</sup> In the aftermath of defeat the idea of a 'Labour Day' best caught the skilled workers' desire to assert their moral and political equality by peacefully organising public space. Robert Slater, who lived in Peter Street, Rockyside, a presser by trade, took the lead in organising a civic holiday to celebrate 'Labour Day'. Slater embodied the co-operative traditions of the skilled. His father, who managed a co-operative society in Lancashire, brought him up a strong Methodist and an ardent champion of co-operation and union. Since arriving in the colony in 1879 Slater had worked in a variety of jobs and formed a number of unions. During the 1880s he plied his trade as a presser and—like several others—emerged into prominence in 1890 by serving as organiser and secretary for several labour organisations, including the T&LC and the Strike Defence Fund.<sup>95</sup> The *Workman* celebrated 'Labour Day' as a chance to salvage dignity from rout, but for Slater it provided a chance to demonstrate to the wider community labour's respectability, its ability to organise a great event, and to give the lie to those who persisted in portraying union labour as idle, drunken and degenerate. The mayor agreed to declare 28 October a public holiday.<sup>96</sup>



*Robert Slater was one of the most influential labour leaders never to sit in Parliament. He was one of the first professional union secretaries and helped to re-form the T&LC in 1889. He also pushed through the formation of the Workers' Political Committee and guided that broad church to dominance within Dunedin and its suburbs. It must have given him great pleasure to sit as the workers' assessor on the Arbitration Court during its formative first decade. Although bitterly disappointed at failing to win re-election in 1906, he continued to labour for the moral and material well-being of the workers.*

Thousands of unionists paraded through Dunedin's main street and on through Kensington to the Caledonian, across the road from the city's gasworks. Sympathetic sources estimated that more than 10,000 marched, thousands more 'were in and about town during the day', and another large crowd waited at the Caledonian. The crafts marched under their own banners. The men wore their work clothes and aprons, for most skilled men dressed well for work. Banners, flags and rolling drums accompanied the procession. The men of the building trades—40 stonemasons, 220

carpenters and 120 labourers—equipped a float on which they displayed their tools and their skills. The members of the ASC&J wore ‘Bows of Red, White & Blue’ to assert their patriotism. All carried banners which boldly declared their views, with mottoes such as: “‘‘Might is right’’ has run its race, ‘‘Right is might’’ now takes its place, No law but *vox populi*.’ Another banner read: ‘Shorten the hours of labour and share in the profits of invention’. The Caversham band led the Iron and Brass Moulders ‘and then came 50 vans belonging to bakers, fruiterers, &c, and four drags carrying Messrs. A. and T. Inglis shop assistants’. The Butchers attracted much attention by parading on ‘more or less fiery steeds’. Coal carts, hansom cabs, and a miscellany of vehicles brought up the rear. The men of the Maritime Council also marched. At the ‘Cally’ a day of feasting and sports had been organised and about 11,000 people attended. The Fire Brigade put on a display and the Wharf Carters beat the Wharf Labourers in the final of the tug-of-war. Mr Hooligan, Dunedin’s largest man, carved a large bullock and the marchers dined in style. No alcohol was allowed, although the pubs of The Flat doubtless did a busy trade.<sup>[97](#)</sup>



*The New Zealand Graphic gave the only image of the 1890 Labour Day parade as it reached the Octagon en route to the 'Cally'. Wertheim (visible in the background) was a brand of sewing machine imported by Hallensteins. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

Shortly after 5pm the skirl of the pipes could be heard on Cargill Road as Harry Warner led some 200 men from the workshops, 'black and grimy from their work', to meet the Labour candidates. The three railway commissioners had become very unpopular with labour during the strike and compounded their unpopularity by refusing to recognise 'Labour Day' as a holiday. The arrival of the grimy men from Hillside saw the large crowd give three cheers for the men and three great groans for the 'Wicked Three' for their 'gratuitous and small-minded tyranny'. That evening a vocal and instrumental concert was given. Everybody thought the day a success. The *Globe*, in which the expansive T&LC and several unions now held most shares, stressed the defensive purpose of the procession and claimed, 'It is a mute declaration of the rights of Labour, a silent affirmation of the justice of the labourer's demand to have a fair share of the products of his own work, and of the principles of Unionism, and a dumb protest against the tyranny of Capital

and the greedy grasping at power on the part of the classes.’ Only disunity, the editor held, could prevent Labour’s triumph ‘and justice ... to all, both rich and poor’.<sup>98</sup> When used in print the word ‘labour’ increasingly appeared with a capital ‘L’ (hitherto this mainly happened when it appeared in partnership with another noun); the change reflected the belief among masters and journeymen that Labour represented a legitimate and neglected interest in the colony, and that the rise of Labour would usher in justice for all and end the worst forms of inequality, those rooted in the new industrial-capitalist social order. For many working men, Labour became a metaphor for moral purpose and social redemption. Labour had become the dynamo of a new and just order.



*The 1894 Labour Day procession as it passed the Queen's Gardens, just by the Exchange. The tower of the stock exchange is visible. This was the financial and commercial heart of Dunedin and Otago. The banner demands that the Otago Central railway be started. Workers saw public works as a major means of reducing unemployment, along with development of and access to land. William Williams Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.*

‘Labour Day’ and the strike itself helped fashion an unprecedented degree of solidarity among skilled men and between them and the unskilled. Many masters, although no longer to the fore, also agreed that the rights of

working men had been denied. In August a broadsheet 'To the Working Men of South Dunedin and Caversham' proposed a meeting in Mr G. Searle's Waterloo Hotel at Forbury Corner to establish a 'Social and Political Club for the Neighbourhood'. After vigorous debate a motion to adjourn passed.<sup>99</sup> The union leaders

on The Flat appear to have been anxious to stymie rank-and-file attempts to form political clubs. They wanted the unions to keep control of Labour's attempt to win political influence. Lister had his own political agenda, but had long since stressed the need for working men to 'awake and combine, and FORCE their just demands'. He caustically reviewed the claims of various candidates to Labour's loyalty. William Downie Stewart, who introduced some of the labour bills in 1890, was dismissed as a trimmer and a no-hoper. He denounced Stout as 'the King of shams', adding that no colonial politician had 'a more barren record or one more full of treachery'. James Allen, Stout's nemesis in 1887, 'is the very embodiment of the "unearned increment"', whereas Lee Smith simply represented the Bond Street merchants.<sup>100</sup> Before the Maritime Strike, Lister noted, it became 'very much the fashion among politicians to pay tribute to the working man ...'. He delighted in exposing all but Fish, for Fish 'is not a University man, only one of the people'.<sup>101</sup>

When the unions announced their programme Lister applauded. They demanded 'Protection to Native Industries', a 'Progressive Land and Income Tax', no further sales of Crown lands and a tax on absentee owners. The city's unions also demanded an 'Eight Hours Bill', 'Seamen's Representation', uniform schoolbooks for the colony, the 'Judicious Continuation of Public Works', and an increase in the honorarium for MHRs. Where the elected House of Representatives and the appointed Legislative Council came into conflict they favoured a referendum 'so that the people may decide ...'. The *Workman* urged the need to elect two or three genuine representatives of Labour and the need for all working men to make sure they had enrolled to vote. This meant that they had to go to the registrar's office in Bond Street, near the exchange, the heart of the city's business district.<sup>102</sup>

While the unions kept their eyes firmly on practical goals, Lister placed those goals in a larger ideological context. 'Destroy the landed monopoly in

this colony', he argued, 'and the backbone of Capitalism is effectually broken.' His language had begun to reflect the desire for a co-operative commonwealth, for a society in which human rights took priority over property rights. Yet this rhetoric echoed key values in the subculture of the skilled. The most novel feature, reflecting the influence of George, Mill and Bellamy, was the insistence that the labour problem could be solved only when the land problem had been.

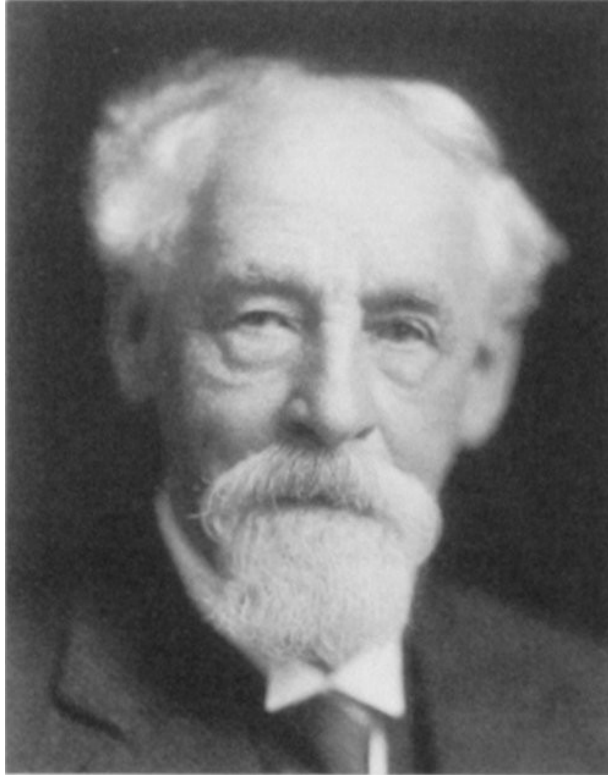
Instead, therefore, of denouncing 'black-legs', the duty of Unionists is to throw the whole weight of their political force against the landed monopoly, to break up the huge estates, making dummyism impossible, ... make absentee ownership or landlordism impossible ..., and work towards making the land the possession of the people as the Almighty intended it should be.

Land, then, was the key to forging a coalition capable of creating a just and prosperous society.<sup>[103](#)</sup>

In previous elections—such as 1881—where the forces of radicalism had been on the march, the unions had put forward a programme and given their blessing to whichever candidates promised support. It became obvious during the parliamentary session of 1888–90 that only conscience held these 'friends' to their promises. Lister delighted in matching old promise to present behaviour. The idea of a 'Labour party' as the vehicle for reform emerged in 1890 without any public discussion. The idea may have been Australian, however, for unionists had already formed labour parties in New South Wales and Queensland (their unions, unlike Dunedin's, had been completely smashed).<sup>[104](#)</sup> Whatever the idea's origins, at a meeting of the T&LC on 18 September Slater moved that 'a committee of five be appointed to act in conjunction with the same number to be appointed by the Maritime Council for the purpose of selecting Labour candidates'.<sup>[105](#)</sup> Several craft unions had rules banning political discussions and disliked this radical innovation. The Typographers split and the delegates from the Tailors withdrew because 'We cannot see our way to interfere in politics in any way'. The Tailors promptly appointed two more delegates.<sup>[106](#)</sup> Most of the city's unions sent delegates to a meeting which asked Stout to stand, but he refused. The unions then persuaded David Pinkerton, president of the Bootmakers and the Tailoresses, to stand. When 'Plain Bill' Earnshaw, brass-finisher at Hillside, announced his intention of contesting the Peninsula seat against Sir William Larnach, the unions promptly adopted

him. In mid-November the combined unions also persuaded the head of the defeated Maritime Council, John A. Millar, to run against the manager of the Union Steam Ship Company in Port Chalmers. Labour also endorsed several radicals for other seats, including Fish and Hutchison of the Protection League for Dunedin City (a new three-member seat). Harry Warner chaired Fish's campaign committee.

In the first instance the unions ignored Dunedin Suburbs, which now included Caversham. Barron stood down and the MHR for Roslyn, A. H. Ross, a magistrate, entered the lists as a supporter of free trade, women's suffrage and Atkinson. Three rivals entered the lists. One of them, William Dawson, personified the handicraft ideal. A brewer by trade, in 1877 he had formed a partnership with Charles Speight, maltster, and when Speight died a few years later Dawson became the manager. The firm flourished in the 'lean years' and even Lister sang the praises of Speight's triple X ale. Dawson strongly supported protection, opposed women's suffrage and prohibition (like Lister and Fish), damned the railway commissioners, supported the T&LC platform, and stressed the need for trade unions. Indeed he told one audience that only unions would be capable of protecting the rights of working men, such as 'one man, one vote'. Ross disapproved of 'one man, one vote' and declared 'the recent strike ... one of the greatest calamities ...—(Uproar and cries of "No")'. The T&LC endorsed Dawson, Lister published the endorsement, and a large number of Caversham's masters and journeymen joined his election committee. At his meetings, however, Dawson was often interrogated about his relationship with the Employers' Association.<sup>[107](#)</sup>



*William 'Plain Bill' Earnshaw was born in Manchester in 1852 and after working his way across America and Australia he settled in New Zealand in 1878, working first at Addington before transferring to Hillside in 1881. He lived on Bathgate Road, a neighbour of Sam Lister's. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

In the city, Labour's three campaigned together and Slater usually chaired their meetings. The T&LC organised their campaigns, raised money from affiliates, and gave some to each Labour candidate. The *Globe* also raised money and several unions, including those that refused to take part as unions, levied their members.<sup>108</sup> Except in opening their campaign, the Labour candidates scarcely mentioned the programme spelt out by the leader of the Opposition, John Ballance, but concentrated on defending the strike, the closed shop, unions, union boycotts and the abortive 'labour bills' of 1890. They also demanded the abolition of the railway commissioners and accused them of doing the government's dirty work. Although the 'Labour Party' proposed several reforms their key policy, however, was that 'working men should be represented by one of their own number'.<sup>109</sup> The Dunedin Electoral League, organised by

employers like Shacklock, opposed 'the return of candidates ... nominated in the interest of one class in the community'. Not all of Labour's opponents belonged to the League, but most of them—James Allen, Lee Smith, James Mills, and Larnach—were large employers or large landowners. The idea that they represented 'the people' while Labour stood for 'class' merely strained popular credulity. The artisans had left 'class' behind in Britain and had no intention of allowing merchants and runholders to re-create it. Reject 'Class Tyranny', the T&LC urged voters on the eve of the poll. The *Evening Star* and the *Otago Daily Times* supported the anti-Labour men, insinuated that Fish and Dawson came to drunken blows, and claimed that the denizens of The Flat were often boozed. Warner denounced these tactics. When rowdies disrupted Allen's first meeting, however, the *Globe* warned that 'If the Labour Party is to keep the respect and support of its best friends, it must take that sort of thing by the throat and strangle it'.<sup>110</sup> By and large it did.

During this upheaval women appear to have played little part outside their homes. True, the existence of 'sweating' in the clothing industry upset the middle classes and saw several prominent men take the lead in organising the first Tailoresses' Union in the country. The Reverend Rutherford Waddell, whose sermon on 'sweating' precipitated public debate in Dunedin in 1888, became the first president and Millar and Pinkerton were among its first officers. The union rapidly grew to become one of the largest in the city and many women in the clothing factories quickly came to see the advantages of union. Mary Lee, however, ignored it. The unionised tailoresses were mainly young and unmarried.<sup>111</sup> Most women on The Flat probably ignored politics and unions. Some doubtless gave their husbands strong support, but most viewed strikes with fear and regarded the agitation as a type of boy's game. We cannot know. Yet women from the city's social elite, including Rachel Reynolds (the wife of William H. Reynolds who successfully moved the one-man one-vote law), were deeply affected by the democratic thrust of the new radicalism. Evangelical Christian women, strong in Caversham's largest churches, also responded to the democratic ferment. It is not clear when the first branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was formed in Caversham or South Dunedin, but women like Mrs Charlotte Grimmett began to support the demand for

women's suffrage. In 1890 most men could avoid discussing the issue although Lister and Fish made their opposition clear. Women may have joked about the eight-hour day and withdrawing their labour, for the idea of strike did not have to be confined to the paid labour market, but the historian faces a frustrating silence in the record. When Harriet Morison became secretary to the Tailoresses, however, she mobilised them behind the demand for women's suffrage and tried to raise the status of domestic servants. This daughter of a master tailor believed 'that without training and skills women would never improve their position in society'.<sup>[112](#)</sup>

## VII

On 5 December the adult men of Dunedin and its suburbs went to the polls. The campaign had generated intense excitement. In Peninsula, which included most of South Dunedin, 'Plain Bill' Earnshaw had 'at his back the roaring Demos'.

Sir William Larnach fought back, 'even when the organised bands from the Flat almost breasted him on the platform and yelled and roared in his face'. Earnshaw won, thanks to South Dunedin. By contrast, the contest between Dawson and Ross roused few passions and Labour's man won easily, thanks to his majorities in Caversham and North East Valley.<sup>[113](#)</sup> Pinkerton headed the poll in the contest for the three Dunedin City seats. The two radicals, Fish and Hutchison, took the other two seats. In Port Chalmers, however, the managing director of the Union Steam Ship Company beat John Millar. Dunedin had returned two journeymen, two masters and a journalist. As the forlorn editor of the *Times* reported:

Labour leaders have succeeded in making the working class in the towns and their neighbourhood believe that the election should be fought as a class contest .... The records at the poll show plainly that it was the Labour ticket that won the city.<sup>[114](#)</sup>

Lister was jubilant. The people had chosen 'the interests of the Masses, and not the Classes'. From now on the partnership of journeymen and masters would be more equal.<sup>[115](#)</sup>

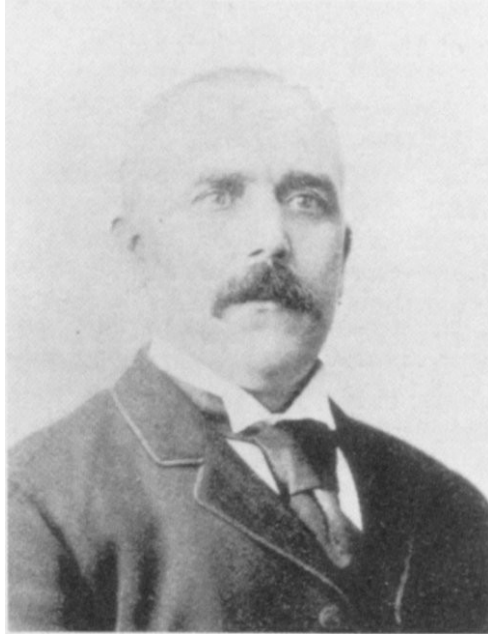
In 1890 Dunedin's fledgling 'Labour Party' had learned how it wanted to be seen and how it could afford to be seen. Political success reinforced the

importance of respectability and moderation, and stamped new meanings on those words. Although several small unions affiliated to the T&LC collapsed following the defeat of the Maritime Strike, and all surviving unions lost membership, the city's labour movement lost no political ground.<sup>116</sup> This was even more so on The Flat, where the local ASRS promptly elected Earnshaw president. John Ballance's success in forming a Lib-Lab Government and its vigorous commitment to 'the labour bills' undoubtedly helped maintain momentum locally. The Otago T&LC tried to play its part by forming a parliamentary committee which, as a concession to craft unionists still wary of political alliances, drafted 'rules [which] debar us from entering into politics outside of Labour Bills and representation'.<sup>117</sup> The widespread belief that 'the recent elections have shown the working men the immense strength they really possess' kept alive the desire for something more than the T&LC's limited gesture.<sup>118</sup> The Opposition's success in using the Legislative Council to block several reforms proposed by Ballance's Liberal-Labour coalition only increased the demand for yet more radical action. For instance, outraged when the Council threw out a Lien Bill which had passed the House unanimously, the ASC&J resolved 'to pledge ourselves to do our utmost towards removing this stumbling block in the path of reform'. The Legislative Council began to rival the 'wool kings' as a symbol of privilege.<sup>119</sup>

Ballance promoted a National Liberal Association to organise popular support for the government. The formation of the Dunedin Association in May 1891 saw the local leaders active in forming branches.<sup>120</sup> The T&LC moved to protect its primacy. In 1891 Slater, of the T&LC, called a meeting of all progressive bodies and unions to establish a Workers' Political Committee (WPC). The T&LC's twelve affiliates sent delegates and so did such unaffiliated unions as the Carpenters, the Engineers, the Railway Servants and the Brewery Workers.<sup>121</sup> The Knights of Labour and the Temperance Political Committee—a united front of temperance organisations—also affiliated. In 1892 the Women's Franchise League teamed up (this organisation was formed upon 'a purely unsectarian basis' in response to Fish's attempt to portray supporters as prohibitionists).<sup>122</sup> The National Liberal Association tried to capture the T&LC and its new political arm, but failed. The WPC thus became the co-ordinating

committee for the Liberal–Labour coalition in Dunedin, a coalition that embraced many constituencies and conflicting expectations. In all of those constituencies skilled workers and masters, or their wives and daughters, were numerous and vociferous. Reform clubs proliferated. Protestant churches, increasingly inclined to focus on the need for the abolition of gambling and alcohol, also became politically active.<sup>123</sup> The triumph of the Liberal–Labour cause released a vast surge of energy in Dunedin and its industrial suburbs, a species of millenarian anticipation that a new world could be created in this new land, a world of brotherhood and co-operation, justice and decency. This had been Bracken’s dream.

Many people in Caversham, now even more convinced that they had made a mistake in allowing Dawson to be returned, looked forward to the next election. In 1891, following the formation of the National Liberal Association, radicals and unionists formed branches in South Dunedin and Caversham. The secretary, George Butlin, promptly sought affiliation to the WPC. Rutherford, who now described himself as ‘one of the old set of Liberals known as Chartists’, took an active part.<sup>124</sup> The Caversham branch, like the provincial association, generated intense enthusiasm and then faded away. The Caversham Electoral League, formed by Rodda of the Bootmakers, did not last much longer. Several citizens of Caversham—including Arthur Morrison, W. H. Warren, John McIndoe and George Burgess, a builder who later became active in borough politics—helped form the city’s only assembly of the Knights of Labour in September 1892. The Knights claimed to transcend the disunity of the unions.<sup>125</sup> Although weak in Dunedin and Otago, the Caversham Knights remained active throughout the 1890s and remained the main organisation in which masters retained considerable influence.



*Arthur Morrison was born in Ayrshire, Scotland, in 1846, educated in a parish school and went to work at the age of nine. He migrated to Otago in 1874 and worked for the Walton Park Coal Co. from 1875 until his election to Parliament in 1893. He was a prominent Druid and twice represented the order at the Grand Lodge in Melbourne before responsible government was achieved by the order in Otago. In 1890 he struck, all by himself, in solidarity. Photo by Reg Graham from Cyclopaedia.*

This explosion of enthusiasm for organisation reflected a widespread distrust of the unions (for many excluded masters). The proliferating leagues and associations hoped to define and control Liberalism in their own areas. Lister may have been near the truth when he criticised the formation of Electoral Leagues in other suburbs: 'The curse of the Liberal cause ... is, that every private wants to be a general .... Every shoemaker demands that the office of Member should go round ...' (Pinkerton's mates actually kept his bench idle).<sup>126</sup> The union leaders held firm. Pinkerton, president of the T&LC and Dunedin's most popular member, skilfully maintained the reasonable and respectable image of the unions, essential in retaining the support of the skilled and the respect of the wider community.

In his annual report he claimed that many employers ‘admit that unionism well conducted is beneficial to employer and employee alike, by preventing, through unfair competition, the wholly unnecessary lowering of a reasonable standard of comfort’.<sup>127</sup> Adroitly marshalled by Slater, the T&LC’s secretary, the unions kept control of the WPC, Slater again being the secretary. In 1893 the WPC established control over the selection of candidates. Given the dwindling membership of the unions this success was little more than astonishing. The success of skilled men, widely supported by masters, in providing reasonable and respectable leadership and policing their potentially turbulent supporters provides one key to this paradox. Riots, when permitted by the leaders, were now well organised.<sup>128</sup> Their continued control of the labour process provided the other key to this paradox. In the Australian colonies, by comparison, the unions were routed and employers seized control of the labour process. In this bitter soil, ideological extremists flourished.<sup>129</sup> To some extent the small scale of Caversham and its sub-areas, a scale of almost domestic intimacy, ensured the survival of consensual processes.

In August Slater wrote to all WPC affiliates, including sixteen unions, inviting them to nominate candidates for Dunedin, Chalmers and Caversham.<sup>130</sup> In October he announced that the WPC had endorsed—by which it meant chosen—Pinkerton, Earnshaw and Hutchison for the city, Millar for Chalmers, and Arthur Morrison for Caversham.<sup>131</sup> All affiliates and candidates accepted women’s suffrage, which had become the law, and the New Zealand Alliance’s demand for no compensation and direct veto. Earnshaw had trouble swallowing the Alliance’s demands but pointed out that urban unionists ‘would never be strong enough to occupy the government benches and therefore must be an “opportunist” party’.<sup>132</sup> Lister raged and frothed that the ‘return of the labour members has been fruitless’. He damned them for subordinating ‘Liberalism to the Prohibitionist fad’, by which he also meant their support for women’s franchise, and argued that ‘The greatest danger now threatening the colony is the domination of the fanatical prohibitionists’.<sup>133</sup> He failed. Plenty of prominent men challenged the WPC’s monopoly. Fish threw his hat into the ring as an Independent and Hugh Gourlay, a leading figure in the National

Liberal Association, decided to stand in its name. The local organisation disowned him and his meetings were hilariously disorderly.<sup>134</sup>

Arthur Morrison's selection as the Liberal-Labour candidate for Caversham brought the suburb into line with the rest of Dunedin. Slater wanted the seat and had 'the insolent modesty', as 'The Chiseler' remarked, 'to announce "that he intends to contest Caversham ... and FORCE HIMSELF ON THE LABOUR PARTY"'. The *Workman* denounced him as a hunter of 'screws', driven by greed. Nor did 'The Chiseler' miss the chance to patronise Slater's trade—presser. 'Like any other old woman he can earn good money at it too, if he likes to shove his flat iron a bit fast, but Bawb is never in much of a hurry—'cept pay day.'<sup>135</sup> Morrison, long resident in Josephine Street, had arrived in Otago from Scotland in 1874. He had worked as a labourer and a salesman for the Walton Park Colliery, just over the hill from Caversham. He had also served on the local council, the school committee, and in the Oddfellows and the Druids. His selection by the WPC may have owed something to his membership of the Knights of Labour, but Labour supporters wanted representatives like themselves, drawn from the ranks, men who were respectable, industrious and loyal; brilliance and conspicuous ability were increasingly distrusted. Working men now saw loyalty to mates and movement as the cardinal virtue.<sup>136</sup>

Morrison made but one major speech, given in Caversham's Presbyterian hall, and claimed that several labour organisations had asked him to stand. He declared himself for women's suffrage and the prohibitionists' direct veto, but declared the latter a minor issue. To loud applause he attacked the Catholic demand for state aid to private schools and the Protestant call for Bible in schools. The audience also cheered loudly when he declared unemployment the major question facing the colony. He defended tariff protection, colonial reciprocity, breaking up estates and village settlements. 'Land', he told them, 'should be as free as air.' He also greeted the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration bill as a major step towards a civilisation in which the rule of law replaced the law of the jungle. The land and income tax and the co-operative system of public works also won his support. He was, in short, a supporter of the Liberal-Labour Government, 'with one or two reservations', most notably the 999-year lease. His opponent, Barron, provided a perfect symbolic foil for Morrison. Barron

made a virtue of being a gentleman—no cabs, no canvassers, no committees—and assured the voters that ‘Nothing was more to be dreaded than the energetic ignorance which would try to reduce everything to the dull, monotonous, dead level of State Socialism’. In a close tussle Morrison carried the day with 1,335 votes to Barron’s 1,199. St Clair gave Barron his biggest victory, but Morrison pipped him in Caversham township.<sup>[137](#)</sup>

The ‘Labour Party’ again swept Dunedin (which included Parkside and Kensington for the first and last time) and the suburban electorates. The extent of the victory measured the success of the WPC and the Labour leaders in bowing to the temperance winds and the gale whipped up by Fish’s quarrel with the Franchise League. The WPC disowned Fish but he ran anyway, as an enemy of prohibition and women’s franchise, backed by several wealthy members of the old Protection League. The *Workman*, completely alienated from the Labour members and Fish, also denounced women’s suffrage and prohibition. Earnshaw swallowed his earlier doubts and supported Stout on the direct veto, breaking with the Liberal Party, now led by Seddon. He had some explaining to do but managed it successfully and polled strongly in Parkside, Kensington and South Dunedin. In the next Parliament, however, he became isolated and irascible. The other Labour men trod warily. Although the Knights considered prohibition an important plank in the Liberal programme, Morrison tempered his private convictions as soon as he began campaigning. Pinkerton, who opposed prohibition, hid the fact. Even Millar, ex-President of the Seamen’s Union and the now-defunct Maritime Council, feigned support for temperance. These social issues, which had largely replaced the labour issues of 1890, threatened but did not destroy the WPC coalition in 1893. The mood had changed so sharply elsewhere, however, that when Slater, on behalf of a jubilant WPC, wrote to Seddon explaining that the Liberals now had a mandate to proceed rapidly along the path of radical reform, Seddon tartly told him that this interpretation was quite wrong.<sup>[138](#)</sup>

## VIII

This ‘thick description’ of Caversham’s politics demonstrates how a community dominated by masters and journeymen reacted to the threat

posed by the 'Long Depression'. As Angus showed, a similar shift from a political system centred on localism and personality to one organised around national issues and social class occurred throughout urban Otago (if not urban New Zealand). In Caversham the concept of working class still included masters, but those who voted for Barron in 1893 clearly opposed Labour. It is impossible to know who voted for whom, but many masters must have voted for Morrison. If we define class in a Marxist or Weberian way, it may be that there was no subculture of working men and no class-based political movement. Such a definition obscures more than it illuminates, for the handicrafts still defined the meaning of class. The phrase 'working men' included masters just as the word 'workers' allowed for the inclusion of women (or at least working women). Despite the complexity of residential differentiation and high rates of geographic mobility, neither prevented the formation of a subculture rooted in the handicraft trades, a political mobilisation, or the construction of an ideology centred on the dignity of labour. It may be true, as Fairburn argued, that the level of unionisation achieved in 1890, although remarkable, was too brief to have any effect.<sup>139</sup> This ignores the intensity and duration of the Maritime Strike in Dunedin (where it lasted much longer than it did in Auckland or Wellington). In Caversham and Dunedin the strike shaped the political aspirations and behaviour of a generation of working men (and some working women from 1893 onwards). More to the point, it is misleading to focus on unionisation alone. Control of the job was even more central in underpinning the subculture of the skilled. That control survived and profoundly shaped politics in the next generation, not only in Caversham and The Flat but in New Zealand; the threat to the autonomous artisan and his control of the labour process had generated that political uprising. The values of a subculture had been crystallised into a political programme. In the process women had joined the Chinese as a threat to be contained; their relationship to the coalition and its programme had become contradictory. Nor was the relationship of the so-called unskilled yet entirely clear. Barron may have won much of his support from those who resented the impending shadow of new forms of exclusion.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Stephen A. McKnight, 'The Evolution ...', in McKnight (ed.), *Voegelin's Search for Order in History*, Baton Rouge, 1978, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> For a defence of the method see Clifford Geertz, 'On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', *American Scientist*, v. 63 (1975), p. 52 and *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> I have sketched the principal differences in the 'Introduction' to Eric Fry (ed.), *Common Cause: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Labour History*, Wellington and Sydney, 1986, pp. 8–15, and have analysed them further in *The Red Feds*, Part II.

<sup>4</sup> Historians have recognised the importance of locality in pre-1890 politics but thereafter discuss the subject in national terms; for Otago see Angus, 'City and Country: Change and Continuity: Electoral Politics in Otago, 1877–1893', Ph.D thesis, OU, 1976.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Two and the One*, trans. J. M. Cohen, London, 1965, p. 201. I am also indebted to Murray Edelman, *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Acquiescence*, Chicago, [1971].

<sup>6</sup> I use Clifford Geertz's definition of ideology as a map of 'problematic social reality' and a matrix for 'the creation of collective conscience'; see 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in David Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*, New York, 1964, p. 64. I have no quarrel with the neo-Marxist definition as meaning in the service of power but find it less useful; see John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication*, Oxford, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891–1912*, Auckland, 1988, pp. 48–52 (for immigrants) and pp. 42–46 and ch. 6 (populism). For British 'populism' see Joyce, *Visions of the People*; Michael Roe, *Kenealy and the Tichborne Case: A Study in Mid-Victorian Populism*, Melbourne, 1974, ch. 7; and Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–1880*, Cambridge, 1992 (I am grateful to Dr Brooking for drawing this book to my attention).

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Clarke, 'The Voyage to Otago, 1870s', research thesis, OU, 1990.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Galt, 'Wealth and Income in New Zealand, c. 1870–c. 1939', Ph.D thesis, VUW, 1985.

<sup>10</sup> Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 92 (for the quotation) and p. 85 (for Mill).

[11](#) E.g. Robert Wilson, *ODT*, 25 Sept. 1884, p. 2 and George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Life and Work*, New York, 1972.

[12](#) George Lichteim, *A Short History of Socialism*, London, 1970, pp. 175–6, 189; Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 122–8; and Joyce, *Visions of the People*, pp. 69–70, 75.

[13](#) Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 122–8.

[14](#) *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850–1900*, Auckland, 1989, pp. 15, 25 (for the quotations) and pp. 117–25 (for ‘the Olssen thesis’). Most of the attacks on Fairburn’s argument take issue with his claims about the incidence of transience in the colony rather than his assumptions about what high levels of transience meant; see the issue of the *NZJH* devoted to his book, v. 25 (Oct. 1991).

[15](#) ‘The “Working Class” in New Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 8 (April 1974), pp. 44–60. Although I concluded that article by saying that we needed to know what class meant to previous generations, I did not anticipate the role of handicraft production.

[16](#) Alexander Bathgate, *Colonial Experiences, or, Sketches of People and Places in the Province of Otago, New Zealand*, Glasgow, 1874, p. 9.

[17](#) Angus, ‘City and Country’, v. 1, p. 122, and for the depression pp. 86–91, 121–3. For an excellent survey see A. H. McLintock, *The History of Otago: The Origins and Growth of a Wakefield Class Settlement*, Dunedin, 1949, ch. 13. McLintock grew up near The Glen and was a Caversham Baptist, like many of Caversham’s bootmakers.

[18](#) The older view is best presented by W. B. Sutch, ‘The Long Depression, 1865–95’, in *Colony or Nation? Economic Crises in New Zealand from the 1860s to the 1960s, Addresses and Papers*, selected and edited by Michael Turnbull, Sydney, 1966. Hawke’s views are summarised by W. J. Gardner in ‘A Colonial Economy’, *Oxford History of New Zealand*, p. 75.

[19](#) Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950*, London, 1958 and *Key Words: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London, 1976.

[20](#) *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, p. iv and successive annual reports of the Department of Labour; see especially, *AJHR*, 1919, H–11, p. 2. For the final quotation see *RR*, 30 June 1916, p. 277.

[21](#) *ODT*, 31 March 1874, p. 2 and J. T. Paul, *Dunedin Operative Bootmakers’ Union: Fifty Years of Effort, 1876–1926*, Dunedin, 1926, pp.

5–7.

[22](#) Paul, *ibid.*, pp. 12–13 and J. D. Salmond, *New Zealand Labour's Pioneering Days: The History of the Labour Movement in New Zealand from 1840 to 1894*, (ed.) D. Crowley Auckland, 1950, p. 87.

[23](#) Paul, *ibid.*, p. 10.

[24](#) *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, pp. 16, 25 and pp. 33–34 for similar comments from James Dickson, master baker. The new union affiliated with the T&LC; Paul MSS Box 8, Hocken Library.

[25](#) M. Beer, *A History of British Socialism*, rev. ed., London, 1940, ch. 7 and Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 153–4.

[26](#) 'The Rise and Progress of New Zealand', in Thomas Bracken, *Musing in Maoriland by Thomas Bracken with an Historical Sketch by Sir Robert Stout, K.C.M.G....*, Dunedin and Sydney, 1890, p. 9. For the earlier reference to handloom weavers see Thompson, *Making*, ch. 9 and Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 32–33.

[27](#) Jones, *Languages of Class*, p. 154.

[28](#) *Ibid*, pp. 153–8, 171; Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp. 184–91; and G. S. Bradley, 'The Otago Trades and Labour Council, 1880–1886', research thesis, OU, 1974, ch. 6.

[29](#) Given the earlier comment about Maori 'waste lands' it should be noted that he was a trenchant critic of the government's policies towards the Parihaka Maori. See W. S. Broughton, 'Thomas Bracken', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, pp. 52–53

[30](#) See above pp. 100–102.

[31](#) *Proceedings of the New Zealand Trades and Labour Conference*, Dunedin, 1885, pp. 8–11 and Thorn to Mother and siblings, 17 Oct. 1875, transcribed and kindly lent by Mrs Loma Kent Johnson.

[32](#) Less than 19 per cent of those entitled to vote took part in the first licensing poll and a majority favoured no reduction; see *AJHR*, 1881, H–37, pp. 5–6. For England, Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 176.

[33](#) Salmond, *Pioneering Days*, pp. 126–8; Olssen, *Otago*, pp. 106–7; and for an analysis of the radicals of the early 1880s, Angus, 'City and Country', pp. 91–92, 97–100, 105–7, 225–37 (for the 1879 election), and 306–17 (for 1881).

[34](#) Salmond, *Pioneering Days*, p. 151; Bradley, 'Otago Trades and Labour Council', pp. 10–11; and Angus, 'City and Country', pp. 327–33

(for 1881) and 391–6 (for 1884).

[35](#) *Proceedings*, pp. 10–11.

[36](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 12–17, 25, 29, 30.

[37](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

[38](#) Robert Slater to James Barr, 12 Sept. 1909, Lincoln Efford MSS, University of Canterbury Library.

[39](#) Bradley, ‘The Otago Trades and Labour Council’, pp. 71–72 (residences), 73–74 (property).

[40](#) *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[41](#) *ODT*, 25 April 1883, p. 2 and for Fish, 17 April 1883, pp. 2–3. See too Joyce, *Visions*, p. 311. The Tyler was also a lodge official.

[42](#) ‘Mr Rutherford on Monopoly’, *ODT*, 28 April 1893, p. 5.

[43](#) *OW*, 29 Jan. 1887, p. 2.

[44](#) *OW*, 16 April 1887, p. 3.

[45](#) *ODT*, 30 May 1887, p. 3, cited by J. M. Boyd, ‘Urban Radicals: A Study of the Radical Movement in Dunedin, 1887–1893’, research thesis, OU, 1984, p. 18.

[46](#) Boyd, pp. 20–21 and Angus, ‘City and Country’, p. 126.

[47](#) Angus, ‘City and Country’, p. 441.

[48](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 385, 388, 392–3 and v. 2, p. 66 and Boyd, ‘Urban Radicals’, p. 21.

[49](#) *OW*, 28 Jan. 1888, p. 4.

[50](#) *OW*, 13 July 1888, p. 5 and for a detailed analysis of the vote (and its significance) see Keith Sinclair, ‘The Significance of the “Scarecrow Ministry”, 1887–1891’, in Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, Auckland, 1963, pp. 113–14, 118–22.

[51](#) *Evening Herald*, 19 and 20 Feb. 1889 and *OW*, 1 March 1889, p. 4 and 31 May 1889, p. 5.

[52](#) Boyd, ‘Urban Radicals’, pp. 68–72.

[53](#) *OW*, 1 March 1889, for a judicious contemporary assessment.

[54](#) It seems that Lister may have been ‘The Chiseler’, although one snippet of evidence, and the name itself, suggests that Harry Warner, carpenter, wrote the column until he left Dunedin in 1891. When Lee Smith and Warner had an argument, Lee Smith’s friends came looking for ‘The Chiseler’; *OW*, 20 Sept. 1890, p. 4.

[55](#) OW, 2 Aug. 1889, p. 4.

[56](#) OW, 3 Jan. 1890, p. 4.

[57](#) OW, 28 Dec. 1888, p. 4 and Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 67–68.

[58](#) For the importance of education to working-class Liberals in England see Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp. 192–217.

[59](#) OW, 8 Nov. 1889, p. 5.

[60](#) For the Exhibition's impact see Geoffrey Vine, "'Doing a Good Work': The Origins and History of the Dunedin and Suburban Reserves Conservation Society, 1888–1915", research thesis, OU, 1983, pp. 14–16. For the membership see Paul, 'Trades Unionism in Otago: Its Rise and Progress, 1881–1912', *Souvenir Catalogue: Industrial Exhibition and Art Union*, Dunedin, [1912], p. 135; and Clive Pearson, 'The Political Labour Movement in Dunedin, 1890–96', research thesis, OU, 1974, p. 23. For the background Salmond, *Pioneering Days*, pp. 40–49, 78–97 and Angus, 'City and Country', pp. 127–33.

[61](#) For the first quotation OW, 6 Sept. 1889, p. 5 and for the second, testimony of John A. Millar to Sweating Commission, *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, p. 13.

[62](#) OW, 6 Sept. 1889, p. 4 and Paul, *Bootmakers*, p. 15.

[63](#) OW, 4 Oct. 1889, p. 4.

[64](#) OW, 29 Nov. 1889, p. 4.

[65](#) Paul, 'Unionism', p. 83. Slater, Warner and Rodda were the three from Caversham.

[66](#) OW, 5 April 1890, p. 5 and, for the Council's formation, 1 Nov. 1889, p. 4. For the growth of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants see Henning, 'Government Railwaymen', p. 31.

[67](#) Paul, *Bootmakers*, pp. 10–15. See also the evidence of Rodda, the union's secretary, and Robert Ferguson to the Sweating Commission; *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, pp. 16, 25. For *Typo* see the editorials in 30 Aug., 27 Sept. and 29 Nov. 1890.

[68](#) Evidence of James Dickson to Sweating Commission in *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, pp. 33–34. For Pinkerton see my essay, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, pp. 386–7.

[69](#) E.g. ASRS to Rail Commissioners, 29 March 1890, reprinted in *RR*, June 1897, p. 127.

[70](#) A. Y. Atkinson, 'The Dunedin Theosophical Society, 1892–1900',

research thesis, OU, 1978 and Olssen, 'Friendly Societies in New Zealand'.

[71](#) OW, 9 Nov. 1888, p. 4 and Minutes of the ASC&J, 30 June, 14 July, 1 and 29 Dec. 1888.

[72](#) Minutes ASC&J, 24 March 1888 and 26 Jan. 1889.

[73](#) *Ibid.*, 10 March 1888, 18 May 1889, 3 and 31 May 1890, and 5 Oct. 1889.

[74](#) *Ibid.*, 23 May, 9 Aug., 6 Sept., 18 Oct., 1 and 15 Nov. 1890; Paul, 'Trade Unionism in Otago', p. 90 for the Fund's final balance sheet.

[75](#) *Ibid.*, 31 May, 18 June, 26 July 1890. See too John Lee to Sir George Grey, 5 Aug. 1890, GLNZ LG(i), Grey MSS, Auckland Public Library, asking him to assist in Christchurch and including his transcription of Warner's instructions.

[76](#) E.g. *ibid.*, 23 May 1890.

[77](#) OW, 31 Jan. 1890, p. 4 and 7 Feb., p. 1.

[78](#) OW, 12 April 1890, p. 5.

[79](#) Minutes of Executive Committee ASRS, 4, 5, 13, 19 and 26 Aug., 1890, ASRS MSS, National Union of Railwaymen.

[80](#) The removal, in the last twenty years, of New Zealand's history from its Australian and Imperial contexts has seen Lane largely forgotten here (although he later became editor of the *New Zealand Herald*). He shaped and mirrored the mobilisation of 1888–90. His journalism, his novels and his Utopian attempt to create a 'New Australia' commanded an enormous following, yet the nature of his appeal is not easy to identify. Racism was central to his politics and he feared class conflict. The white nation mattered most to him, yet as Marilyn Lake, 'Socialism and Manhood: The Case of William Lane', *Labour History*, no. 50 (May 1986), p.54, has argued, his belief in the power of working men to save the nation from racial pollution also reflected 'an anxiety about gender ... as well as a consciousness of class.' The best biography of Lane remains Lloyd Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement*, Sydney, 1935.

[81](#) Salmond, 'Origins', p. 323 and for the report *AJHR*, H–5, p. v. For the sales of Bellamy's book see J. B. Bradshaw, *New Zealand Today, 1884–1887*, London, 1888, p. 60.

[82](#) OW, 22 March 1890, p. 1 and 21 June 1890, p. 4.

[83](#) OW, 5 July 1890, p. 5.

[84](#) OW, 6 Sept. 1890, p. 1 and 13 Sept., p. 4. For the origin and history of

the strike see Salmond, 'The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement from the Settlement to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1840–1890', Ph.D thesis, OU, 1924, v. 1, pp. 104–23 (and many of the letters from contemporary union leaders to Salmond in v. 2, Appendix F). See too I. A. Merrett, 'The Maritime Strike of 1890 in the South Island', MA thesis, Canterbury, 1970.

[85](#) J. Hutchinson, *The Wellington Bootmakers' Union, 1885–1917: A Short Review of the Work of Organization Incorporating the Great Auckland Strike of 1891*, Wellington, 1917, p. 12. James B. Hulbert, a foreman clicker, gave evidence before the Sweating Commission, and may have been the same man; *AJHR*, H–5, p. 28.

[86](#) OW, 30 Aug. 1890, p. 4.

[87](#) OW, 23 Aug. 1890, p. 4 and Minutes of Executive ASRS, 14 Oct. 1890. For the previous points see OW, 11 Oct. and 1 Nov. 1890.

[88](#) OW, 4 Oct. 1890, p. 1.

[89](#) OW, 13 Sept. 1890, p. 4.

[90](#) OW, 30 Aug. 1890, p. 5 and 13 Sept., p. 5.

[91](#) OW, 7 Feb. 1890, p. 4 and 14 June 1890, p. 4.

[92](#) OW, 24 May 1890, p. 4 when he warmly greeted the platform of the Financial Reform Association, a rather conservative group, and 4 Oct. 1890, p. 4.

[93](#) See 'Conference to Settle Maritime Strike', *AJHR*, 1891, H–2, and William Belcher to J. D. Salmond, 19 July 1924, in Salmond, 'The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement', v. 2, Appendix F, p. 28.

[94](#) Salmond, *ibid.*, v. 2, Appendix F, p. 81.

[95](#) This information is from his obituary, *ODT*, 16 July 1931. For his role in organising a public holiday on 'Labour Day', see Paul, 'Unionism', pp. 94–95.

[96](#) OW, 25 Oct. 1890, p. 1 and 1 Nov., pp. 4–5. See Joyce, *Visions*, p. 53: 'Public space was indeed a visual analogue of the vote.'

[97](#) *Globe*, 29 Oct. 1890, p. 2 and for the carpenters' bows, ASC&J Minutes, 25 Oct. 1890.

[98](#) *Globe*, 27 Oct. 1890, p. 2. For accounts of the day see *Globe*, 29 Oct. 1890, p. 2; OW, 1 Nov. 1890, p. 5; and Paul, 'Unionism', pp. 94–95.

[99](#) OW, 16 and 23 Aug. 1890, p. 4 (for both).

[100](#) OW, 10 May 1889, p. 4; 14 June 1890, p. 4; 8 Nov. 1890, p. 4.

[101](#) OW, 5 July 1890, p. 4 and 27 Sept. 1890, p. 5.

[102](#) OW, 20 Sept. 1890, p. 4.

[103](#) OW 4 Oct. 1890, p. 4. For a discussion of their influence see Frank Rogers, 'The Influence of Political Theories in the Liberal Period, 1890–1912: Henry George and John Stuart Mill', in Chapman and Sinclair (eds), *Studies of a Small Democracy*, pp. 153–74.

[104](#) Bede Nairn, *Civilising Capitalism: The Beginnings of the Australian Labor Party*, Canberra, 1973 and Robin Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia 1850–1910*, Melbourne, 1960.

[105](#) Slater to Paul, Nov. 1912, Paul MSS, Box 8, Hocken Library.

[106](#) Cited by Pearson, 'Political Labour Movement in Dunedin', p. 27.

[107](#) Slater (Sec.) to Dawson, 13 Nov. 1890, in OW, 15 Nov. 1890, p. 8; *Globe*, 13 Nov. 1890, pp. 2, 4 (for speeches); and *ODT*, 22 Nov. 1890, p. 2

[108](#) Pearson, 'Political Labour Movement', pp. 29–32 and Slater to Paul, Nov. 1912, Paul MSS, Box 8. See also Paul, *Bootmakers*, pp. 16, 22; Otago Typographers' Association Board of Management Minute Book, 11 Nov. 1890, Hocken Library; and *Globe*, 7 Jan. 1891, p. 4.

[109](#) OW, 18 Oct. 1890, p. 5 and 8 Nov. 1890, p. 4.

[110](#) Paul, 'Trade Unionism in Otago', p. 118, for the T&LC slogan; *Globe*, 7 Oct., p. 2 (for Electoral League) and 3 Nov. 1890, p. 2 (for 'rowdies'); and Warner to OW, 20 Dec. 1890, p. 5.

[111](#) Penelope Harper, 'The Dunedin Tailoresses Union 1889–1914', research thesis, OU, 1988 provides the best coverage of the union's formation.

[112](#) Penelope Harper and Melanie Nolan, 'Harriet Russell Morison', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, p. 336.

[113](#) The quotations are from the *Tuapeka Times*, 13 Dec. 1890, cited with a denunciation by Lister in OW, 20 Dec. 1890, p. 4. For the results see *ODT*, 6 Dec. 1890, p. 4.

[114](#) 6 Dec. 1890. p. 2.

[115](#) OW, 29 Nov. 1890, p.4. See too Angus, 'City and Country', ch. 9.

[116](#) T&LC affiliated membership soared from 2,989 to 5,415 between August and October 1890 then fell to 1,641 in April 1891. Over the following year membership fell to 1,229; see Pearson, 'Political Labour Movement in Dunedin', p. 23 and Paul, 'Trade Unionism in Otago', pp. 87, 135.

[117](#) R. Slater to L. Beer, 28 Aug. 1891, Paul MSS, Box 8.

[118](#) E.g. OW, 20 Dec. 1890, p. 4.

[119](#) Minutes, 19 Sept. 1891.

[120](#) Pearson, 'The Political Labour Movement in Dunedin', pp. 45–46.

[121](#) *Ibid.*, and for the affiliates, including the Tailoresses with 600 members and the Bootmakers with 200, see Paul, 'Unionism', p. 135. Four other affiliates had memberships larger than fifty and the rest were smaller. The 'Rules and Constitution of the Workers' Political Committee' are in the Paul MSS, Box 348.

[122](#) See Kenneth W. Turner, 'Henry Smith Fish and the Opposition to the Female Franchise in Dunedin, 1890–1893', research thesis, OU, 1985, pp. 52–60.

[123](#) Keith Furniss, 'A Social History of the Moray Place Congregational Church', research thesis, OU, 1975. For the NLA's campaign, see William Bolt (Sec. NLA) to Slater, 19 Aug. 1891; Bolt to all unions, 10 Sept. 1892; and Slater to Bolt, 21 Aug. 1891, 10 and 24 Nov. 1892, Paul MSS, Box 8 (this file also includes several papers by Slater, written in 1912, recalling the events of the late 1880s and 1890s).

[124](#) George Butlin to Slater, 8 May 1893, Stewart MSS, Series 20, box 52, f 39, and Boyd, 'Urban Radicals', p. 56.

[125](#) ODT, 16 Sept. 1892, p. 2; *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 48–49; and Boyd, pp. 58–60.

[126](#) OW, 25 March 1893, p. 6.

[127](#) ODT, 25 May 1893, cited Paul, 'Unionism in Otago', pp. 92–93.

[128](#) For instance, when 1,500 greeted 'turn-coat' Fish at the Railway Station with a barrage of abuse, dead rats and rotten eggs in November 1891 or, a year later, when 3,000 demonstrated in favour of the Shop Hours Bill outside A & T Inglis; *Globe*, 11 Nov. 1892, p. 2.

[129](#) I am indebted to Professor Stuart Macintyre for drawing this to my attention; see also Ray Markey, *The Making of the Labor Party in New South Wales, 1880–1900*, Kensington, NSW, 1988.

[130](#) Stout (Sec. NLA) to Slater, 28 Aug. 1893, Stewart MSS, series 20, box 50, f 1.

[131](#) ODT, 5 Oct. 1893, p. 3 and 'The Platform of the Workers' Political Committee, Otago, 15 November 1893', in 'Clippings: Political Interest 1901–1911', Stewart MSS.

[132](#) *ODT*, 27 Oct. 1893, p. 8 (Lister did not print that remark).

[133](#) *OW*, 4 and 25 Nov. 1893, p. 6 (for both).

[134](#) The National Association also disowned him; W. M. Bok to Slater, 15 Nov. 1893, Stewart MSS, Series 20, box 50, f 39.

[135](#) *OW*, 18 Feb. 1893, p. 8.

[136](#) This is similar to the Australian pattern; see John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, London, 1988, p. 265.

[137](#) *OW*, 11 Nov. 1893, p. 3; *ODT*, 18 Nov. 1890, p. 4; 21 Nov. 1893, p. 3; 28 Nov. 1893, p. 3; and 29 Nov. 1893, p. 2 for the result.

[138](#) Seddon to Slater, 11 Dec. 1893, Stewart MSS, Series 20, box 50, f 39.

[139](#) *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies*, pp. 117–25.

## CHAPTER 8

### ***From Liberalism to Socialism, 1893–1922***

The competing ideological positions of the late 1880s had begun to yield a new consensus about the diagnosis for social ills and the best cure. The idea of socialism began to enter political discourse although the word itself seldom appeared before 1890. If one accepts Marx's proposition that 'language is real, practical consciousness', then the boundary between what goes without saying and what cannot be said 'represents the dividing line between the most radical form of misrecognition and the awakening of political consciousness'.<sup>1</sup> The word 'misrecognition' begs many questions, but our response to the stories of Mrs Lee and Mrs Brown illustrates one dividing line which has shifted (as Mrs Lee was at pains to point out to her socialist son). Be that as it may, the crisis of 1889–90 challenged the everyday order and its language, creating a situation which called for and created the possibility of a new and heretical discourse about power and the relationship between property and freedom.

Elements of a new socialist discourse lay to hand and had been absorbed into popular attitudes on The Flat: Paine's view of the Rights of Man, Ricardo's labour theory of value, the assaults on industrialisation by Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, not to mention the indictments of land monopoly spelt out by George and Mill, had prepared the way for the establishment of a new language which had the power to transpose private experience—inarticulable feeling—into a legitimate public discourse. Working men and women on The Flat had a sense of themselves as a group by 1888–89, even if based on no more than the fear of the Chinese 'menace', but the great crisis of 1889–90 saw the word 'socialism' first used to provide a diagnosis for the colony's ills, a diagnosis consistent with the central postulates of artisan radicalism, a sense of direction for the future, and in some forms of the ideology a clear idea about the historic role of Labour in redeeming the New World from the ills of the Old and realising a vision of social justice. It is not coincidental that during this

crisis large numbers of women came to entertain a separate but similar view of themselves. In the early 1890s women narrowed their focus to insist on women's suffrage and justified their demand in terms of an ideology of separate spheres based on biological difference. 'The Colonial Helpmeet' unwittingly prepared for her confinement to marriage, motherhood and home.<sup>2</sup>

If nobody on The Flat (or in Dunedin) used the word socialism before 1890 it was not because the word had not been coined but because it conjured up images of impractical utopianism or revolutionary (and Continental) fanaticism. Skilled workers, like Britons generally, had a strong sense of themselves as practical and sensible. Yet the process of legitimising socialism moved forward, unable to speak itself but groping to that end by articulating the central meanings of the unspeakable word. Bellamy's breezy novel, *Looking Backwards*, contributed significantly to the legitimisation of a new discourse and achieved considerable popularity in Dunedin. It may have won still more in Caversham where the author's namesake ran the Edinburgh Castle hotel. Bellamy's vision of a co-operative commonwealth and his indictment of trusts and monopolies spoke directly to the experience of skilled men. Unchecked competition led to the accumulation of property in fewer and fewer hands, poverty stalked the land, and the promise of migration to a new land came undone. The contrast between Old World evils and New World hopes created a growing tension. Bellamy, unlike Henry George, the founder of the Knights of Labour, did not diagnose land ownership as the key to the growing inequalities of the time, but both invoked the moral universe of the skilled, deeply grounded in Protestant faith, to indict the consequences of competition and greed. Both also portrayed the state as the vehicle for reform, although George presented a minimal programme known as the single tax, whereas Bellamy sketched a 'Co-operative Commonwealth' based on public ownership. Both men presented their views as universal truths and it is easy to forget that the worst consequences of greed, sweating and dilution might have represented opportunities to the Chinese and to women.

Although there is less evidence for the popularity of William Morris's works it seems likely that he had an audience among the artisans of Caversham. Morris, unlike Bellamy, stressed neither the role of the state nor

the importance of efficiency. As the most articulate heir to the Romantic critique of industrialism, he centred his vision of a socialist society on the importance of the craftsman's creative role (he took it for granted that only men could be creative). It is a measure of our distance from the 1890s that few readers will understand the relationship between creative art and industrial production. For Morris the link between craft and creativity was fundamental. The dignity of labour, the only basis for a humane society, required that invention, design and production should not become the basis for a new division of labour. Society had to be organised to protect the craftsman from the debasing consequences of industrialisation. It was not the machine but capitalism, he argued, which insisted that goods be produced for profit rather than use. Capitalism debased labour into mindless drudgery, reducing the skilled man to the ranks of the unskilled, instead of using the new technologies to liberate men and give them greater leisure (one of the demands made in 1890). The desire for a shorter working day was linked to the vision of a new social order based on production for use, not profit. Morris's popular *News from Nowhere*, first published in serial form in 1890, spelt out his case for socialism.<sup>3</sup>

The radicals of the 1880s had not thought along these lines, but their belief that the will of the people should frame the law made it easy, given the universal male franchise passed in 1879 and the abolition of plural voting a decade later, to equate the voice of the people—*vox populi*—with the state. William Bolt, the city's staunch radical who now graced the Legislative Council, spelt out the connection plainly in addressing the founding conference of the National Liberal Association. Bolt explained that universal suffrage had made the state the instrument of popular will and, after rehearsing an old radical's hopes, he declared that only the nationalisation of all natural sources of wealth would prevent further growth in the gap between poor and rich. He dismissed the argument that nationalisation was not practicable; the only question was, 'is it right?'<sup>4</sup> For a democrat like Bolt the voice of the people was by definition right. Implicit in this new faith in an expanding state as the vehicle and the goal of reform was the notion that brotherhood and co-operation were superior to selfishness and competition. That idea fed on and was legitimised by the community's faith in mutualism, itself linked to voluntarism. If voluntarism

embodied a belief in the essential goodness and decency of men and women, and hence provided the coping stone for popular government, mutualism gave that idea a co-operative gloss. In mid-Victorian Britain mutualism won widespread acceptance among skilled workers. Its institutions—unions, co-operatives, and friendly societies—helped them to protect themselves even though they were still excluded from the political nation. Prominent intellectuals, including J. S. Mill, defined co-operation, the practical expression of mutualism, as central to civilisation and progress. ‘It is only civilized beings’, Mill wrote, ‘who can combine.’<sup>5</sup>

For most people, including most radicals, the word socialism had negative connotations in 1890, especially its association with ‘levelling’. Lister protested, ‘We are not levellers nor anarchists nor advocates for universal social equality knowing that such a state of affairs can never exist.’ He favoured greater social equality than existed, but even in 1891 took most comfort from the fact that ‘handicraftsmen can sit in Parliament’.<sup>6</sup> Most skilled workers believed that skill, knowledge and effort should be rewarded. Quite a few of their leaders—especially those who had grown up in the two capitals, Edinburgh and London, like Lister and Fish—viewed the civil service as idle and parasitic, and distrusted the state. They damned any measure that encouraged people to look ‘to the State for everything, [as it] paralysed individual effort’ and made the idle and improvident a charge upon the industrious.<sup>7</sup> True, in 1890 Reeves wrote his justly celebrated articles in defence of socialism, but he directed these to the colony’s leading men and they attracted no attention on *The Flat*.<sup>8</sup> Yet the *Workman*’s correspondents began expounding new viewpoints. ‘Publico’ claimed that ‘If the workers are ever to gain their rights ... they will learn that the more the State undertakes to do the better it will be for them, and that when the State does everything, the time of the Redemption of Labour will have arrived.’<sup>9</sup> Lister, still distrustful of the state, endorsed a co-operative commonwealth where ‘everybody would be a shareholder alike, and would receive an equal dividend from the common fund’. Despite Lister’s caution, socialism increasingly signalled the growing association between democratic values and the idea of state ownership (although immediately following the election victory he wanted above all ‘An Honest Electoral Roll’).<sup>10</sup>

The tension between those who saw an expanding state as the instrument for reform and those wary of any concentration of power reflected a difference over the nature of the ideal society and the evolutionary direction of change. In 1893, for instance, Earnshaw defended the Shops and Shop Assistants Act against the criticism that it would drive small shops out of business by declaring concentration a law of nature. Lister fumed. Concentration and monopoly were bad. Each small shop, he pointed out, 'decently supported a family, and assisted in maintaining an independent class of people who called no man master'.<sup>11</sup> Yet the balance of opinion in the *Workman* indicates that Lister felt increasingly persuaded that socialism was the philosophy for the times even if he refused to accept concentration as a law of nature. For a while he preferred 'Co-operation', which he held to be 'Socialism on a smaller scale', and he followed William Lane's attempt to establish a new and co-operative Australia in Paraguay.<sup>12</sup> For many radicals and working men, however, 'Individualism v. Socialism' summed up the great conflict of the time. Men like Lister had difficulty resisting the claims of a creed which aimed for 'fraternity' and saw, in each advance of state power, movement towards a 'Co-operative Commonwealth'. The romantic critique of industrialism spelt out by Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris helped to ease his transition. He never believed it desirable to 'nationalise everything .... "All property is robbery" say some of these Socialists, but we never knew or heard of any Socialist saying so who had any property to lose.'<sup>13</sup>

John Ballance's Liberal-Labour Government, by greatly expanding the role of the state in the face of furious opposition from 'bloated over-fed capitalists', persuaded many working men that 'when the State does everything ... the Redemption of Labour will have arrived'. Men schooled in the traditions of artisan radicalism proved susceptible (although hostility to women's suffrage and prohibition could slow the process). Nor did Christian faith render men immune. Millar, of the Maritime Council, spoke for many when he addressed the Anglican Synod on 'The Church and Socialism' and justified his new political faith in terms of the Sermon from the Mount and 'the brotherhood of man'.<sup>14</sup> Christian Socialism, strong in Christchurch, had its adherents, especially among Anglicans, but those from the Nonconformist churches of England found Robert Blatchford the most

persuasive.<sup>15</sup> Lister serialised Blatchford's most famous work, *Merrie England*, and began writing 'that individualism must give way to a wise socialism, which cares for the welfare of the smallest unit in society'. He also now stressed the anarchy of capitalism. 'It is without a plan, and is in fact a chaos.' Socialism had become a remedy for depression as well as the name for a just and decent society. In a word, it embodied those democratic values which the colonists were weaving into the fabric of social life on The Flat.<sup>16</sup>

Lister took longer than many to decide that socialism constituted the answer but his brand of democratic radicalism helped to shape the local definition of socialism. In 1893, for example, after much debate, the Workers' Political Committee announced a programme of reform. The first five clauses dealt with the need to perfect democracy. Then came the demands: '*The State find employment for all those who cannot find it for themselves*, such work to be done on the co-operative principle'; the eight-hour day and the forty-four-hour week; a law prohibiting foreign labour under contract; compulsory arbitration; and repeal of conspiracy laws relating to industrial conflicts. Under 'Social Reform' the Committee demanded a state bank, old age pensions and the nationalisation of all land, railways, mines and coastal shipping services. The *Workman* criticised the idea that railways and shipping services be nationalised and doubted 'the wisdom of asking for so much all in one breath'.<sup>17</sup> Despite Lister, all of labour's demands made their way into the Committee's final policy.<sup>18</sup> The acceptance of the public-ownership clauses illustrates the extent to which this new word, 'socialism', had become acceptable among journeymen and masters. In the climate of the times, moreover, many who denied being radical, let alone socialist, supported these demands. We can never know whether the skilled masters and journeymen on The Flat thought of themselves as socialists in the early 1890s, but we do know how they voted. We also know that over the next thirty years socialism absorbed, and in the process was altered by, the desires of Caversham's journeymen and masters.

# THE PLATFORM OF WORKERS' POLITICAL COMMITTEE, OTAGO.

## REFORMS

### Already Attained and to be Adhered to.

1. The securing of voting power to every adult. Qualification: Residential, six months in the colony and three months in Electoral district.
2. The securing of a stringent corrupt practices law with a clause providing for all accounts paid by candidates or their agents being filed with the registrar of elections, candidates to make statutory declaration that there are no other liabilities.
3. Securing of compulsory arbitration.
4. The repeal of all conspiracy laws relating to industrial disputes.
5. The securing of voting power to every adult householder in municipal elections, and the abolition of plural voting.

## ELECTORAL REFORM.

1. The election of all local boards; said boards to be elected annually on the same franchise as for Parliamentary elections.
2. The fixing of a specified day on the occasion of general elections; said day to be declared a public holiday and all hotels to be closed.

## EDUCATIONAL REFORM.

1. Free and secular education from primary schools to the university.
2. Compulsory education up to the age of 14 years; pupils passing the Sixth Standard before attaining that age excepted.
3. The opening of the High Schools only to those who pass the Sixth Standard and to holders of junior scholarships; said scholarships to be increased in number.
4. The placing of all educational endowments under the control of the Minister of Education.
5. One universal set of standards

STONES' PRINT.

and one set of school books for the colony; such books to be issued at cost price, and printed in the Government Printing Office, or in any private office working under trades union rules.

## LABOR REFORM.

1. The finding of work by the State for those who cannot obtain it for themselves; such work to be done on the co-operative principle where practicable.
2. The extension and strengthening of the Labor Bureau to meet the requirements of all classes of the community.
3. The curtailing of the hours of labor by statute until every member of the community can be employed.
4. The statutory prohibition of foreign labor under contract. The exclusion of pauper aliens, and a poll tax on all Asiatics.

## SOCIAL REFORM.

1. State ownership, under direct Ministerial control, of land, railways, mines, and coastal marine service.
2. The establishment by statute of a permanent old age pension fund, to be provided from the consolidated revenue.
3. The establishment of a State Bank with a monopoly of note issue.
4. Direct legislation by the people by the introduction of the Referendum, with the initiative in the hands of the people.
5. The establishment of State Fire Insurance.
6. The curtailment by the State of the individual acquisition of excessive wealth.
7. The abolition of special and grand juries, and payment to jurors of 10/- per day when sitting or in attendance at civil or criminal sessions and coroners' inquests.
8. The abolition of compulsory benefit societies and insurance schemes upon employes.

W. BELCHER, Chairman.  
J. H. HANSON, Secretary.

*The platform of the WPC, 1896. J. T. Paul MSS, 982/8, Hocken Library.*

The Fabians have often been identified with the growing acceptance of 'state socialism' but in the early 1890s they had little influence on workers

in Britain let alone the colonies. Reeves, who became a Fabian when he settled in England later in the 1890s, had been much more influential in New Zealand. He easily achieved intellectual and political dominance over the 'Labour Party' and in 1893–96 waspishly championed 'socialism' as the measure of the gulf between the radical dream and the Seddonian reality. Later, from London, his brilliant articulation of socialist ideals in terms of the social laboratory, with its resonant echoes of pioneering, did more to legitimise the socialist agenda than any British theorists.<sup>19</sup> On The Flat, however, acceptance of socialism owed little even to Reeves, at least before his public spat with Seddon in 1895–6, and uneasily coexisted with a preference for the social forms of voluntarism and localism. Membership of friendly societies grew, for instance, but most branches remained suspicious of provincial structures and jealous of their local autonomy. It was the same among the unions. Socialism, in short, pointed to the growth of a less selfish and more altruistic society in which the state's role would grow, but it contained a contradictory desire to resist the growth of national power over their own lives. The ideal of a society of independent artisans and masters unlocks the paradox, for they wished to use the state to outlaw those practices inimical to such a society (Morris was closer to their views than Bellamy or Blatchford). They thought this could be accomplished easily, however, and that the state then would have no more to do than the local policeman.

The increasing frequency with which people used the word socialism between 1890 and 1893 signals a profoundly important shift in attitudes. Words and concepts from the earlier discourse of radicalism, even words and concepts from evangelical Protestantism, acquired new meanings without losing their old ones, but the new meanings both built on and modified the old. The idea of the dignity of labour was extended to include unskilled and demeaning labour, or at least to raise the possibility that it might be included; the state became the means of realising the principle of brotherhood and co-operation; and words such as worker and labour conjured up a new historic role for the meek and the humble in delivering the world from evil. The word Labour, spelt with a capital when written, now embodied these notions and asserted that inequalities created in the labour market were the only important ones. The concept of Capitalism

(which prepared the way for socialism) rendered the workers the oppressed. It is a pity that we do not have Cheng Chuen's comments on this new meaning, but Mary Lee was unimpressed. As her memoir makes clear, she resolutely refused to see herself as a victim; and the idea that men with wives to look after them and their children, albeit men with secure jobs which paid far more than she could ever earn—the idea that they were oppressed left her cold. She always disliked socialism and had no time for unions. Other skilled women in handicraft trades often agreed but they were going to be defined as peripheral. The Workers' Political Committee, interestingly enough, began to be known as the Workingman's Political Committee once women's suffrage became law.<sup>20</sup>

Those cultural analysts, like Bordieu, who reflect on the ways in which 'Words wreak havoc when they find a name for what up to then had been lived namelessly', exaggerate the explosive and sudden nature of the shift when what could not be spoken is spoken and the world of private fears and feelings is transposed into a public key which is, being public, more authoritative. Psychoanalysis, with its image of the repressed and its release, obscures the complex continuities which exist and, in dramatising change, tends to overlook the slow accumulation of processes—social and economic, political and intellectual—which prepare the way for the new word. In stressing continuities and complexities, we must not forget that in 1889–90 men and women began reorganising the ways in which they thought and their ideas about what might be done. The documentary evidence does not allow us to say whether 'wild men of words' appeared in the pubs, lodges and chapels, but they began appearing in the new political organisations and unions which proliferated and they forged a new ideology. The Minister of Labour, William Pember Reeves, led the way in talking about socialism, but locally its champions carefully built on older values derived from artisan radicalism. They may have asked for less than socialists in New South Wales, for instance, but they won widespread acceptance. The state, in Fairburn's words, would be used to restore Arcadia.<sup>21</sup>

After the 1893 elections Morrison represented the working men, the masters and now the women of Caversham. In his maiden speech to the House he never mentioned socialism and said that ‘talk about capital and labour being antagonistic is pure bosh. Capital and labour are no more natural enemies than brothers are.’<sup>22</sup> For all that, he strongly supported tariff protection for local manufacturers, compulsory Conciliation and Arbitration, which became law in 1894, the Masters and Apprentices measure, and Railway Classification, which passed in 1896. So did Dunedin’s other labour men, although Earnshaw had grave doubts about anything which Seddon wanted, and tried to mobilise the men of the workshops against the Classification Act’s failure to recognise the standard rate.<sup>23</sup> These measures were designed to structure industry and industrial relations on principles derived from the handicraft trades, principles which journeymen and masters believed the ‘competitive system’ was destroying. The experience of the bootmakers, the pervasive nature of the ‘boy problem’ and even aspects of the ‘Woman Question’ underlined the seriousness of the situation. The Chinese presence only inflamed the fear that, unchecked, the ‘competitive system’ threatened civilisation itself.

Of the three major legislative struggles to consolidate the position of the skilled men, the first became the most famous. The history of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act need not detain us except to note the influence of the skilled men on that measure. Four of Dunedin’s labour men, two of them from The Flat, sat on the Labour Bills Committee. Pinkerton chaired the committee from May 1893 until the end of 1896. Dunedin’s unionists had long espoused arbitration and the Knights of Labour had made it a central plank in their platform. Pinkerton and Earnshaw initially defended the measure as a means of sharing profits and thus reducing the growing disparities of wealth, but by 1894 they agreed with Reeves, at least in public, that the law’s principal purpose was the peaceful resolution of industrial disputes. Like most masters and men in the skilled trades they thought industrial war as insane as war itself. When they spoke of the rule of law and the rule of reason—key values in Paine’s philosophy—as being superior to the rule of force they voiced their deepest conviction. Besides, they saw no necessary dispute between Capital and Labour. The principle of arbitration expressed this viewpoint, one central to

masters and journeymen, and one easily accepted by railway workers.<sup>24</sup>

The Arbitration Act of 1894 established a Conciliation Board in each of eight industrial districts, consisting of an equal number of representatives from the organised masters and the organised workers. These people then selected an independent chairman. Either party to any dispute could take it before the Conciliation Board and if agreement proved impossible either party could then take the matter to the Arbitration Court. A Judge of the Supreme Court presided over the Arbitration Court and had two assessors, one elected by workers' unions registered under the Act and the other by unions of employers registered under the Act. The purpose of the Act went far beyond setting up this system, however. The men of the 'labour party' saw the measure as a means of promoting the formation of trade unions. They agreed with the Sweating Commission that in unionised industries 'wages do not sink below a living minimum and the hours of work are not excessive ...'.<sup>25</sup> As Victor Clark, one of the more incisive students of the arbitration system, explained:

it was not originally proposed to legislate regarding all the conditions of employment, even where conciliation failed. Those conditions were assumed to be already established by custom, tradition and mutual agreement. The projectors of these acts appear to have thought that a body of common law was lying latent somewhere in industrial practices, that only needed the interpretation of a judicial tribunal to be called into active manifestation.<sup>26</sup>

This described the handicraft trades and those factories, such as the Hillside workshops, which employed autonomous industrial craftsmen. Hence, as the Webbs sneered, 'Every trade sought to get its Common Rules embodied in law'.<sup>27</sup> '[A] fundamental consensus existed' in the 1890s about wages, hours and conditions. Disputes often ended with the parties 'congratulating each other ... upon the fine spirit and excellent presentation displayed by the opposition'.<sup>28</sup> Although the consensus about wages frayed over the next decade it remained the Court's practice to resolve disputes involving skilled workers by proceeding to a reputable establishment to ascertain 'the custom'.<sup>29</sup>

Consensus is what one would expect of Lister's printing shop, Shacklock's foundry, Thorn's workshop, or Lambert's pipe-making factory. Master and journeyman agreed on 'the custom'. Only the introduction of new technologies caused dispute and then, often, as with the linotype

machines, only the larger establishments could afford them.<sup>30</sup> The consensus may also explain the remarkable absence of debate over the 1905 Arbitration Amendment Act, which made strikes and lockouts illegal. The only comment from the Otago T&LC congratulated the government.<sup>31</sup> The men of the handicraft trades were not prone to strikes. Nor were the industrial craftsmen in the city's metal shops. They had a deep-seated horror of strikes and, when one occurred, lamented the fate of the women and children. When the Red Feds later articulated the view that only two classes existed, destined to wage war until the expropriators had been expropriated, skilled workers, and especially those in un-unionised crafts, thought them mad. As the Workers' Political Committee resolved, in presenting Reeves with an ornate illustrated address in thanks for his work in enacting compulsory arbitration, it replaced war with peace 'without any Sacrifice of Manhood'. It was, in short, a model for the world of how conflict could be resolved under the banners of Reason and Progress.

The Masters and Apprentices bill also provides a useful insight into the aspirations of skilled workers and the nature of 'the custom' that they wanted to protect. The Sweating Commission had recommended legislation to deal with 'a living wage, and the teaching of trades', and the 1891 Conference of the Trades and Labour Councils drafted a measure.<sup>32</sup> In their enthusiasm the unions proposed imposing the norms of the handicraft trades on all employment to root out 'the boy-labour evil' and protect the jobs of adult men. The House spent little time on the first bill but in 1894 the 'labour party' drafted a second bill which specified the length and nature of apprenticeships, the rates of pay and holidays, and outlawed any employer from hiring more than one apprentice to every four journeymen. The Labour Bills Committee took evidence. The skilled men, officials from the Department of Labour, and some employers supported the measure. All agreed on the need to solve 'the boy-labour evil'. Arthur Scoullar, a successful master in the furniture trade, one of the few who were prosperous at this time, had shifted from Dunedin to Wellington to oversee his firm's expansion. His testimony reveals the depth of the consensus. He quarrelled with some detail but claimed that his firm followed all the principles. They paid their apprentices 'a fair wage', observed the ratio of one boy to four journeymen, and retained most of those they trained. He

agreed that ‘excessive competition’ had ‘over-stocked’ some trades, with regrettable consequences. Masters in the engineering trades were more hostile and even Scoullar voiced scepticism about solving the problem by passing a law.<sup>33</sup> The Labour Bills Committee ran out of time and agreed to print and circulate the hearings in the hope of finally dealing with the issue in 1895.<sup>34</sup>

There was no progress in 1895 but the bill proved more popular with the Trades and Labour Councils than any other (it is significant that many delegates had difficulty remembering to use the term ‘working man’ instead of ‘artizan’).<sup>35</sup> Seddon, who replaced Reeves as Minister of Labour in 1896 (having driven him from the colony), strongly supported the measure but persuaded the committee to insert ‘the word “skilled” before the word handicraft ... and to strike out the words “or unskilled craft”’.<sup>36</sup> This limited the bill’s intent by making apprenticeship the test of skill and ignoring other trades. The bill proposed that all apprenticeships should last five years, made employers responsible for training their boys, and prohibited the employment of artisans who had not served apprenticeships in the handicraft trades. These trades were listed in an appendix. On Morrison’s motion the committee, which he had joined in 1895, accepted the skilled workers’ dream, the one-to-four ratio of apprentices to journeymen. Opponents unsuccessfully proposed a one-to-three ratio.<sup>37</sup> On Millar’s motion—he having joined the committee in 1894—they also agreed that a magistrate could terminate ‘any indenture’ if both parties agreed and then accepted a formula for setting minimum wages for apprentices in all districts.<sup>38</sup>

In 1896 the House debated the bill for the first time. Seddon—ex-fitter, Prime Minister, and now Minister of Labour—put the case for the measure trenchantly:

the necessity for this bill arises from this fact; that youths are employed at disgracefully low wages, to the detriment of our skilled workers: ... Shall the fathers of this colony be put in a position to maintain their families and hold their heads up as men, or be made dependent, be degraded, and have to live on the earnings of their children, while the adult artisan has to walk the streets, or take employment on co-operative works, or go on relief ...?<sup>39</sup>



*In 1899 Seddon made his first visit to Caversham, arousing enormous enthusiasm. Here he is speaking at Caversham School. The Boer War had whipped up a froth, of Imperial jingoism. Hocken Library.*

Pinkerton did not speak—he disliked public debate and confined himself to clarifying issues—but Millar could not resist scoring a parochial point, one rooted in the experience of several southern crafts. ‘Auckland is the sweat-den of the colony’, he declared, and the bill would bring that city into line.<sup>40</sup> Morrison outlined the skilled man’s analysis of the social consequences of ‘excessive competition’—the growth of ‘boy-labour’, the erosion of ‘the standard rate of wages’ and the debasement of skill. His speech was peppered with ‘respectable’, ‘honest’ and ‘fair’. He exalted ‘the honest manufacturer’ who

‘requires a fair price ... pays fair wages to his journeymen, treats them fairly, and employs only tradesmen’. It is interesting that women had disappeared as a threat, along with the Chinese, although the union still campaigned to ensure that they could never again be a threat.<sup>41</sup>

Although the measure never became law, the Arbitration Court adopted its key features when it began regulating conditions in skilled trades. Nor was this surprising. During the 1896 debate Earnshaw criticised the measure’s rigidity and agreed with the masters of the metal trades that their industry, including brass-founding and finishing (in which he had trained), would be wiped out. Other ‘labour’ members agreed with him although, despite their reservations, they reluctantly supported the bill as a ‘labour party’ measure. Earnshaw also objected to the measure because it discriminated against the lad who learned a trade without serving an apprenticeship, and cited himself as an example. At the end of his speech Earnshaw argued that it would be more sensible to allow the Arbitration Court to settle the various issues on a trade-by-trade basis, together with a minimum wage, rather than seeking uniformity. Edward Tregear, the influential head of the Department of Labour, broadly agreed with Earnshaw.<sup>42</sup> In 1896–97, as the Conciliation Boards and the Court began hearing the first cases in skilled trades, this is what happened. Bob Slater, Rockside’s ubiquitous union secretary (whose brother worked at Hillside), served as the workers’ assessor on the Court from the first case in 1896 until 1907. The employers refused to take part in the selection of their assessor and the government chose a master jeweller—a handicraft trade—to represent them. In these circumstances it can hardly be considered surprising that the Court set minimum wages, imposed ratios of one apprentice to three or four journeymen, and required five- to seven-year apprenticeships.<sup>43</sup> Support for a Masters and Apprentices law evaporated.

The Railway Classification Act of 1896 may have signalled to the Court’s president the sort of policy favoured by the government. As we have seen, this measure gave statutory authority to the division of labour in the metal trades. Division I consisted of managerial and white-collar workers; Division II of manual workers subdivided further into traffic, locomotive (the workshops) and maintenance departments. At the top of the hierarchy came the leading hands in the various trades and then three

‘subclasses’ of trades. Leading hands were to receive between 10/6d and 11s a day, ‘subclass 2.1’ between 9s and 10s, ‘subclass 2.2’ between 8/6d and 9s, and ‘subclass 2.3’ still less. Beneath these came the ‘Improvers’, ‘subclass 2.4’, who were apprentices out of their time. The Classification Act assumed that promotion would be by seniority. Patternmakers and the men of the metal trades, except for tinsmiths, could be promoted up to ‘subclass 2.1’ but carpenters, painters and trimmers could not rise above ‘subclass 2.2’. Beneath the skilled men came three more subclasses ranked according to skill. Nobody in these subclasses had to have served an apprenticeship. The skilled labourers included machinists, strikers, holders-up, the foundry’s forgemen, furnacemen and fettlers. Labourers came at the bottom of the heap. The division of labour and authority established during the first industrial revolution had been embodied in statute.<sup>44</sup>

The artisans did not get everything that they wanted but their increasing success in reshaping industrial relations on the state-owned railways did as much as anything on The Flat to legitimise public ownership and socialism, thus discrediting older anti-statist views. The establishment of a bureaucratic system of labour management began to extend not only the Hillside workers’ sense of their entitlements—to a regular job, apprentice-based crafts, seniority—but to influence the attitudes of the entire community. Over the next twenty years—1896 to 1916—the men at the workshops extended their rights to include superannuation, the ‘living wage’ and core rates. Increasingly they also demanded that casuals—including ‘temporary casuals’, ‘permanent casuals’, ‘hour-to-hour casuals’ and ‘probationers’—be granted the same entitlements.<sup>45</sup> The fact that a sizeable proportion of the local workforce had achieved such goals legitimised them for others. Not all liked to think of them as ‘socialist’ but all liked them (and socialists increasingly spearheaded campaigns for new rights). The ideology of labourism, predicated on the belief that all men were entitled to work and to control that work, was widely accepted, whether given an ideological name or not. On The Flat, in brief, Classification did as much as any other law to translate a sectional interest into a universal truth about the ideal society.

By 1896 the skilled men who constituted the 'Labour Party' had done well for the colony's artisans and tradesmen, helped by the ex-fitter, Seddon, who dominated the Liberals, Parliament and the country. A political storm had swept into Dunedin, however. The Temperance Political Committee, a body established by various organisations which supported prohibition and an affiliate of the Workers' Political Committee, set out to commit the WPC and its MHRs to their policy. They waged a scurrilous but unsuccessful campaign against Morrison, who actually supported temperance, to bully him into supporting the 'bare majority and 'no license'. Having failed to capture the WPC the prohibitionists damned it as a front for brewers and in October resolved to oppose Morrison, Millar and Pinkerton.<sup>46</sup> Argument raged in the letter columns of the dailies. The Women's Franchise League, another powerful affiliate of the WPC, split amid 'disgraceful' scenes.<sup>47</sup> The WPC, now controlled by the city's trade unions, dumped Earnshaw, having wearied of his identification with Stout, his obsession with prohibition, and his attacks on party discipline.<sup>48</sup> Earnshaw ran as 'Independent Labour'. Ironically, only Hutchison, now obsessed with the totalisator as the source 'of our national vice, gambling', retained the support of all organisations. He lost.<sup>49</sup> The 'Labour Party' tried to re-establish its identity in order to disentangle itself from the WPC's factionalism, but in Dunedin only Millar won re-election, becoming, as the *Times* happily noted, the 'sole survivor of a ship-wrecked party'.<sup>50</sup> In Caversham, encouraged by the disarray within the ranks of labour, three hopefuls took the field against Morrison. The Caversham electorate had been reconstituted, losing its semi-rural areas and now including the entire borough, South Dunedin and St Kilda (the boundaries remained the same for the next four elections). Morrison won easily, despite (or because of) the fulminations of the *Times* about labour's 'revolutionary plans'. Of the eight polling booths on The Flat, he took all but St Clair. The prohibitionists had little muscle outside St Clair and even Lister, who had denounced party government in 1893, defended it vigorously in 1896.<sup>51</sup> Earnshaw, denounced by all, lost and lost heavily.

It is worth emphasising that the WPC suffered defeat because it insisted on staying aloof from the prohibitionists when they refused to accept the collectivist ethos. The WPC consisted of two delegates from each affiliate

and the executive of the T&LC. The unions dominated although they did not see eye to eye on prohibition. They did agree, however, on the need to abide by decisions of the majority. They also agreed on the centrality of 'the pledge'. Each candidate put forward by the WPC had to agree to sign a pledge that he would 'withdraw from the contest if not selected' and, if elected, do all in his power to advance the WPC's platform. At the end of each session of Parliament the MHRs had to explain what they had done to advance the platform (Earnshaw's refusal marked his break with the WPC), and before each new election they had to submit to re-selection. In brief the WPC translated the idea of union solidarity into politics. In 1896 Pinkerton, Morrison and Hutchison signed and two prominent masters from The Flat, Lee Smith and Hugh Gourlay, accepted the result. Hutchison apparently changed his mind later, having returned from Wellington, and this may have harmed him. Morrison appears to have had no qualms about signing.<sup>52</sup>

Morrison continued to represent the journeymen and masters of Caversham effectively. Industrial matters interested him much more than social issues like prohibition, although, like every Labour MHR of the 1890s, he strongly supported attempts to exclude 'foreign immigrants'. In the 1899 elections W. H. Warren contested the seat as 'Independent Labour'. An active member of the ASC&J, Knight of Labour and prohibitionist, Warren had lived in Kensington since arriving from London in 1874. He preached prohibition and plucked some anti-Catholic chords. Morrison defended his record. Faced with a clear choice between social and industrial strategies for improving the workers' lot, the voters at St Clair, Anderson's Bay and the Wesleyan schoolroom voted for Warren. Wesleyan, in the heart of The Flat, reflected the appeal of prohibition and anti-Catholicism to the respectable who lived face to face with drunkenness. Many may have been Wesleyans.<sup>53</sup> Warren, although eccentric and prone to fads, polled well across The Flat, for prohibition was becoming a divisive issue in predominantly working-class areas of the electorate. Few any longer publicly denied the importance of temperance (indeed the Edinburgh Castle had been closed down in 1894). Morrison won easily, however, with 62 per cent of the vote.<sup>54</sup> By 1899, however, almost everybody agreed on the central importance of excluding undesirable immigrants and developing the colony's manufacturing industries. The local Protection League had

atrophied for want of opposition but thanks to the economic boom and the arbitration system the advantages once claimed for tariff protection were being achieved. Prosperity also spawned votes for the government in the city. The Dunedin Branch of the Liberal–Labour Federation, formed by Seddon to hold the party’s urban coalition together, chose Millar and a young radical, A. R. Barclay, as its candidates and promised ‘to secure the return of J. F. Arnold [a bootmaker], the candidate selected by the Labour Unions’. The Workers’ Political Committee chose Millar and Arnold, gave its blessing to Barclay, and all three won.<sup>55</sup> A Liberal–Labour consensus existed on The Flat and in Dunedin. Lister acknowledged the shift by re-naming his weekly *Otago Liberal* but Fred Rayner’s *Sketcher*, which appeared intermittently between 1898 and 1907, whenever Fred was in town and short of cash, rivalled old Sam with his brilliant caricatures and skilful cartoon statements.<sup>56</sup> The *Budget*, which appeared from 1897 until 1911 (and which has largely failed to survive), also appealed to families and reflected the changing climate.



Rayner would have none of the immigrant radical's complaints, but his contented if not complacent colonial reflected, as David Low recalled (Autobiography, p. 38) the easy acceptance of 'an astonishing number and variety of social experiments ... [which] seemed dangerously "advanced" to an English visitor .... Nobody had been frightened of ... socialism or state ownership ...' *Sketcher*, Election Issue, 1902.

In October 1901 Morrison died. A veritable host of Lib–Lab candidates entered the lists for the safe seat of Caversham. The WPC, confident again, nominated a little-known master bootmaker and Catholic, Pat Hally, and the Liberal–Labour Federation backed him.<sup>57</sup> Few knew him, although he had been active in the Bootmakers' Union, still took an active interest in his

trade, and had once helped the Tailoresses before the Arbitration Court.<sup>58</sup> The skilled journeymen who dominated the unions affiliated to the Workers' Political Committee clearly attached little importance to the distinction between masters and journeymen. They also failed to recognise the dangers of sectarianism. Warren of the Carpenters decided to stand again because of the WPC's partiality to 'a certain religion' (an issue which was intertwined with prohibition because of Catholic opposition if not Irish-Catholic drinking and an issue more explosive where Warren lived because most of The Flat's Catholics lived near the Basilica and drank at Heffernans, across the road from the South Dunedin Town Hall). He criticised the selection process, hotly denied Hally's right to be the official union candidate, and claimed that Hally could not be a Catholic and a supporter of secular education.<sup>59</sup>

'Plain Bill' Earnshaw, a known enemy of Seddon's and a staunch prohibitionist, came back after five years in the North Island. He failed to win back the support of his old lieutenants, 'Robert [Rutherford] the Match-maker, Phillip the Charioteer, and Edward the Merchant ...', but stood anyway. He too derided Hally's claim to represent the workers and attacked his Catholicism. He claimed that Catholics ran the country and demanded that the public service be purged of them.<sup>60</sup> As 20 per cent of South Dunedin's population were Catholic many of Earnshaw's meetings were very rowdy. Two unknowns, including the youthful H. S. Bedford, BA, whose interest in social questions had triumphed over the desire of his father, one of Caversham's master tailors, to train him as a farmer, also joined the fray, but nobody took them seriously. The final candidate, Thomas Kay Sidey was Caversham's mayor, a position he had held twice previously. He avoided the mud-slinging, defended the government, and also claimed that he could represent the working man. Unlike the others, who sometimes harangued the electors for hours, Sidey always spoke quietly and never for more than forty-five minutes. In a nasty campaign he personified good manners, civility and tolerance. Given the importance attached to such values in the home it would not be surprising, although we cannot tell, if women supported him more strongly than other candidates. Everybody in Caversham recalls him as a 'real gentleman'.<sup>61</sup>

Sidey had grown up in the family's big house in Corstorphine although

he lived first above the township on Caversham Valley Road. His father John, a Scot by birth and a carpenter by trade, became a building contractor in London before migrating to Otago in 1848. He made his pile by carting supplies to goldminers and shrewdly investing in land. He declared himself a 'settler' when T.K. was born in 1863. His sons were taught at home then attended the Boys' High and the University, where T.K. graduated in law. T.K. inherited a powerful desire to serve his fellow citizens. He taught in the Presbyterian Sunday school and became superintendent in 1885, a position he held until the end of his life. As he often told his audiences during the campaign, he had served on the Caversham School Committee for eleven years, been mayor three times, and sat on the Drainage and Sewerage Board, the Council of the University, and the High Schools' Board of Governors. 'I am a member of the committee and an ex-president of the Dunedin Horticultural Society [an organisation with strong roots in the Wesleyan community], and a member of many other bodies.'<sup>62</sup> He might have mentioned the Druids, Oddfellows and Masons. He knew every Presbyterian family on The Flat, virtually everybody in Caversham, and a good number of others. Old stalwarts of the Liberal cause, men like Rutherford and Thorn, supported him strongly. Hally recognised the threat from Sidey and mocked his claim 'to enter into the sympathies of any working man. Mr Sidey had probably never cleaned his own boots in his life—(Laughter and applause).'<sup>63</sup>



*E. H. Thompson of Macandrew Road issued another series of the Sketcher from 1912 onwards. His views mirrored those of the rougher elements of South Dunedin. His version shows local ambivalence about Sidey and his major cause, and a certain respect for Prime Minister Massey. Thompson identified with the more radical and 'manly' elements, and regarded Sidey as an effeminate twit with aspirations to gentility. Cartoonists in this period, as Low noted, delimited to draw 'a small [Englishman] ... with buck teeth, top-hat, spats, monocle ... who was always saying "Bai Jove".' It is almost as if Thompson has recognised the electoral appeal of 'the real gentleman' and is trying to destroy it. Sketcher, 4 Dec. 1914.*

The voters weighed the rival claims of class and community, as they would do many times in the next twenty years. Hally won the polling booths in his own neighbourhood, out in lightly settled St Kilda and Musselburgh, but in South Dunedin and Kensington he trailed Earnshaw.

Sidey swept the Caversham township booths and beat Hally in all but one of the South Dunedin–Kensington booths. Earnshaw carried South Dunedin easily and his brand of anti-Seddonism, prohibitionism and anti-Catholicism drew considerable support among the respectable warehousemen of St Clair and the suburban clerks and artisans of Anderson's Bay and St Kilda. Sidey beat Earnshaw by 100 odd votes in a poll of over 4,500 and Hally came in a poor third.<sup>64</sup> Earnshaw tried again in 1902 and 1905 but Sidey increased his majority each time, and in the latter year 'Plain Bill' carried only his home booth, the Wesleyan schoolroom, while the largest booth, the South Dunedin Town Hall, long an Earnshaw stronghold, voted two to one in favour of Sidey.<sup>65</sup> As one might expect, Sidey and his lieutenants tended to take Caversham for granted but they organised in South Dunedin. Most of his campaign workers were working-class folk and few were self-employed, but (significantly) he organised most vigorously to get women's votes and the South Dunedin Ladies' Committee was the best organised part of his campaign. In an area where drunkenness and violence were not unknown, 'a real gentleman' was at no disadvantage against a ranting table-thumping man.<sup>66</sup>

Despite his reputation for diffidence and indecisiveness, Sidey identified with the 'left wing' of the Liberal caucus, especially on issues relating to industrial matters and the cost of living. In 1905, possibly worried by the formation of an Independent Political Labour League, he voted to nationalise the food supply and the clothing industry. He also worked hard at helping his constituents, especially those in the public service. He wooed the men of the workshops by helping their sons to get apprenticeships and blocking or assisting transfers. He brought up any grievances that the men had, either with the Minister or in the House. Whenever discontent in the workshops threatened to explode Sidey joined with other Members from electorates with workshops to petition the Minister. Not surprisingly he managed to secure a position on the Labour Bills Committee, now chaired by Arnold, and the Railways Committee. The Education Committee was closest to his heart, however, and he worked hard for legislation to professionalise the training of dentists and musicians and to secure for Otago a Dental School. As befitted a keen gardener who also belonged to

every sporting club on The Flat, and held high office in most, Sidey also introduced a measure first known as a Summer Time Bill (soon known as Daylight Saving). He carefully calculated his appeal to the shopkeepers, clerks, warehousemen, masters and journeymen of his diverse electorate and busied himself incessantly in community events. During his first two terms he usually managed to attend almost every public function run by a friendly society, a church, a school committee, or one of The Flat's many sporting clubs. He regularly attended the annual picnic of the Hillside Workshops and handed out the prizes. At most functions he also spoke.<sup>67</sup>

In the 1908 elections Sidey faced a challenge from the Political Labour League.<sup>68</sup> The League's national organisation and a Caversham branch had been formed in 1905. Something of the tenor of local politics can be gauged from an incident at the inaugural meeting, when John Gilchrist provoked uproar among the forty-five people present by claiming that the slums of South Dunedin equalled those in his native Glasgow.<sup>69</sup> Gilchrist urged the workers not to be afraid 'to go the whole hog', but others, such as the master upholsterer, William Hood (ex-president of the T&LC), disliked the idea that Labour represented only one class, and merely wanted to strengthen the progressive Liberals. The meeting to form the Otago League compromised by electing Hood as president and Gilchrist as secretary.<sup>70</sup> In 1905 the fledgling League gave its blessing to all Liberal-WPC candidates, including Sidey, but in 1908 the League challenged Millar in Dunedin West and Sidey in Dunedin South (the electorate having been renamed the previous year). The ethos of the handicraft trades still dominated, for the League chose a master baker, J. W. Munro, to tackle Millar and a master builder, Robert Douglas, to tackle Sidey. Small craft unions dominated the League. The conservative *Times* thought Sidey a less extreme socialist than Douglas but found it hard to distinguish the two men; both favoured large 'proposals for the extension of the functions of the state'.<sup>71</sup>



*Rayner's Sketcher (no. 17, 1902) mocks the immigrant radical's claim that The Flat rivalled the slums of London or Glasgow.*

Sidey swayed with the Labour wind and organised his electorate committees

thoroughly. Douglas claimed that the rising cost of living had undone the 'progressive work' of Seddon and accused the Liberals of having sold out to the farmers and merchants. Sidey rejected the claims. A torrent of questions indicated the changing mood. He had to deny that the government planned to lay off the men employed on the Burnside railway section (just over the southern ridge). He also denied that 'new arrivals had been placed on this work in preference to local men'. He urged the development of the country's iron deposits—a hot issue among metal workers—and declared in favour of state ownership, 'if considered prudent'. 'He also favoured giving labourers the full reward of their labour, or anything else that would bring about a more equitable division of wealth; and was opposed to

indiscriminate immigration.’<sup>72</sup> At the end of his address in the South Dunedin Town Hall an aggrieved man from the workshops ‘submitted certain questions’ and thundered that some ‘bosses’ at Hillside ‘were not fit to be [in authority] over pigs’. Luckily for Sidey the man was more intent on venting his fury than in embarrassing the local member.<sup>73</sup> Women, needless to say, took no part in these public meetings and rarely attended. Where the Labour League assumed that women would deduce their true interests from their husbands’ occupation, or even vote as instructed, Sidey’s Ladies’ Committee visited every woman in her home while the menfolk were at work.



*By 1900 there were only eight hotels left in Caversham, compared to fourteen in 1882. Despite having run the Caversham Hotel for thirty-eight years Francis Porter was refused a licence by the Licensing Committee in 1909, after a vote for reduction. He and his daughter then ran it as a private hotel. Hocken Library.*

Sidey held his seat easily. Douglas did not live in the electorate and this doubtless harmed him, but he came within ten votes of taking the booth in the Wesleyan schoolroom—Earnshaw’s old stronghold—and carried the Kensington booth by a narrow margin. Among the industrial workers of

Kensington and South Dunedin Sidey lost ground heavily to the League's man, suggesting that the name Labour retained a strong hold on the loyalty of many, or that the League's vigorous support for prohibition—something the Liberals could not claim—helped. Interestingly, the licensing poll quite overshadowed the election throughout the city and showed that the booths at Wesleyan and Kensington remained strongly for no-licence. No booth exceeded Wesleyan's enthusiasm for no-licence and only South Dunedin's largest booth, the Arcade (on Cargill Road), voted for continuance. The Labour League, at least with a candidate like Douglas, did best in areas which backed no-licence. Skilled men and their wives, not to mention women such as Mary Lee, now widely accepted what once had been a fad for a handful of radicals. Respectability and independence had acquired a new dimension.<sup>74</sup> Not that Sidey's victory greatly upset anyone; all agreed that 'the interests of the constituency were in eminently safe hands'.<sup>75</sup>

Over the next three years Douglas capitalised upon his new prominence and secured election to the city council where he had second thoughts about his ties to Labour. 'His ambition ...', as one observer noted, 'is much stronger than any of his radical principles.'<sup>76</sup> Sidey buried himself in constituency work as the Liberal caucus tore itself to pieces over land legislation and a new wave of industrial unrest gathered momentum in the north. Although a Dunedin branch of the Socialist Party attracted increasing attention, it had few members and little support on The Flat (railway employees, being public servants, could not join political parties). Even the sharp recession of 1909 had little local impact.<sup>77</sup> In Caversham, few paid much attention to these echoes from the wider world. Most rejoiced in full employment, steady work and the belief that they had helped make New Zealand the social laboratory for the world.

A quiet but intense patriotism, the outer spirit of protectionism, found expression at many public functions. In 1909 the local Trades and Labour Council launched a collection to buy bread for the suffering women and children of England 'in the name of Humanity'. The campaign enjoyed widespread support.<sup>78</sup> The ASC&J, in its campaign for Dominion status and 'Home Rule', contributed to the growth of self-conscious nationalism. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers marched down the same path. The idea

of industrial self-sufficiency, let alone the vision of New Zealand as a great industrial nation, fed on and fed New Zealand nationalism. Grandfather McIndoe was not alone in bringing up his children 'to remember Scotland with affection but to love New Zealand with passion ...'.<sup>79</sup> When Caversham School received a Union Jack from Caversham School in England in 1909, a large audience and 600 scholars, led by the school choir, sang Tom Bracken's 'God Defend New Zealand'. Then Miss Nellie Rutherford recited William Pember Reeves's 'New Zealand'. In that poem the toiler is king and men and women are equal. After various speeches the crowd sang 'Sons of the Southern Cross' before ending the occasion with 'God Save the King'. In 1917, when a new school was opened in St Clair, the assembled 'scholars' sang 'the New Zealand Anthem'.<sup>80</sup>

Sam Lister, of course, had fervently championed an 'Independent Nationality' and many in Caversham had met Reeves and known Bracken. Bracken's fame had grown since his death. Although he had lived up the hill in Mornington he had been well known on The Flat because of his prominence in the Independent Oddfellows. His life mirrored Caversham's. An Irish Protestant by birth, he had worked in Victoria as a farm labourer and miner before migrating to Dunedin in 1869, at the age of twenty-six. In 1875 he began publishing the *Saturday Advertiser* and championing New Zealand as a model of equal opportunity and democracy. His anthem, 'God Defend New Zealand', first published in 1876, sang of the new nation as an exemplar to the world long before the Liberal-Labour government came to power. Locally, however, he had become not only a venerated poet but a prophet of what might be. 'To grip him by the hand, weak as he was [as he lay dying in 1898], is a memory I shall always cherish.'<sup>81</sup>

### III

Sidey spun his political philosophy from the fears and hopes of the decent citizens of Caversham and The Flat. He represented the Liberals but he also embodied the characteristics of 'the Labour leader', being at one with his constituents and loyal to his old friends, a man 'of average ability ... of modest if persistent usefulness'. His skill at keeping both ears close to the political ground made him a sensitive barometer of the political

temperature. In 1911, when brawny Jack MacManus contested Dunedin South, Sidey articulated his progressive viewpoint in a manner which expressed the dominant ideology of the electorate even as it sought to preempt the Socialist challenge. In the South Dunedin Town Hall, where he now always gave his main addresses, Sidey disputed the claim that ‘progressive legislation had ceased with Mr Seddon’s death’. He borrowed heavily from Benjamin Kidd’s popular work on *Social Evolution* to argue that modern society evolved from political equality to equality of opportunity to social equality. The weak and the poor drove the evolutionary process by demanding concessions from ‘the power-holding party’ and, in particular, a more even distribution of wealth. In Sidey’s words the lower were raised at the expense of the higher. The Liberals, he claimed, were advancing New Zealand along the evolutionary path by ‘counteract[ing] a tendency which the example of older countries had shown us was to be expected from the unrestricted play of the forces of modern industrialism—namely, a tendency to produce extremes of wealth ... and ... poverty ...’. In effect, however, Sidey offered little other than the removal of all tariffs on articles consumed at breakfast, a ‘left’-Liberal rallying cry in 1911, and the speedy completion of the Lawrence–Roxburgh railway line.<sup>82</sup> He may have been wise to stress the larger ideological themes although the *Times* concluded that both candidates were ‘socialists’.



*MacManus on his wedding day, 1908, and at the height of his power. The couple met through the Socialist Party. In 1914 they moved with their first three children to the Catlins where they lived in a tent while MacManus broke in the bush. In 1915, for reasons not known, he enlisted for service and returned home only in 1918. Courtesy Mrs Pearl Preston, copied by Reg Graham.*



*David Low vividly expresses a widespread cynicism about the social division of wealth, status and work as he imagines a conversation between New Zealand's new governor and the Labor Prime Minister of Australia. The homeliness of the scene contrasts dramatically with the image of the working man which became popular during the war—physically strong, aggressive and palpably 'man alone'. One of the major achievements of the Socialists and the Red Feds was to persuade so many that Ward and Massey were equally useless to the workers.*

MacManus had been active in the Socialist Party since arriving in Dunedin in 1909 to become organising secretary for the General Labourers' Union (formed in 1905).<sup>83</sup> An Australian by birth, he had learned about ideology and politics as a member of the Australian Workers' Union. However fervent his faith in socialism, he recognised the need to avoid large strikes and proceed gradually. The Socialists demanded the

nationalisation of every business, whereas radicals like Sidey saw ‘no exceptional virtues’ in ‘state ownership and management, save in those large utilities and necessities ... which it is not desirable should be under private control’.<sup>84</sup> Nationalisation, for men like MacManus, fulfilled the democratic dream of common ownership and promised to deliver equality and justice. During the campaign the Socialists spent most of their energies denouncing compulsory military training and explaining their views on prohibition, which (they resolved) ‘does not touch the root of economic wrongs, ... yet will be of great advantage to all concerned ...’. The ‘Yellow Peril’ also featured.<sup>85</sup> The Socialists won most of their support on The Flat from unionists (described by one Sidey lieutenant as ‘the scraps of South Dunedin’).<sup>86</sup> By contrast the key figures in the city had graduated from handicraft trades. James Munro, who contested Millar’s seat in Central (which now included Rockside, The Glen and part of Kensington), had become a master baker in partnership with Peter Neilson, another prominent Socialist; Mark Silverstone, an immigrant from London’s Jewish ghetto, had been a key figure in the Furniture Makers’ Union but had been self-employed and in 1921 established his own factory; while Arthur McCarthy, who campaigned ‘to make “God’s Own Country” a reality and not a sham’, had served his apprenticeship as a locksmith under his father and now, having become a gunsmith, owned his own factory and shop. J. W. Stables, the quiet vegetarian who often lectured on ‘The Ethical Basis of Socialism’, had served his apprenticeship as a compositor and now managed a printing shop. Masters, such as William Hood (an upholsterer), also continued to play a major role in the Trades and Labour Council.<sup>87</sup>

In 1911 Dunedin’s Socialists merged their identity into the New Zealand Labour Party. The NZLP, founded at the end of 1909, self-consciously modelled itself on the old Workers’ Political Committee. Only unionists could belong and all candidates had to sign a pledge to vote, if elected, in accord with caucus decisions. Even old Warren urged ‘the necessity of the Workers establishing a Political Party under their own control’, a blunt rejection of the Lib–Lab alliance. The Trades and Labour Council established a Labour Representation Committee to select candidates and even the ASC&J sent delegates (the newly formed executive board strongly opposed the local branch’s political activities).<sup>88</sup> Labour contested every

Liberal seat in 1911 but chose an employer, a sawmiller named Macpherson, to run against James Arnold in Central, which now included over 1,200 voters living north of the Main South Road and, in Kensington, the railway. A poorly attended meeting of the Southern ASC&J endorsed Macpherson but Arnold campaigned as the only working man standing. He had a point. In the late 1880s he had spearheaded the clickers' campaign to gain admission to the Bootmakers' Union and then became one of the dominant figures within that union. His skill in debate and business brought him wider recognition and in 1899 the WPC chose him as a candidate for the city. He won, and proved himself a loyal labour man, working unobtrusively for his constituents and chairing the House Labour Bills Committee. In 1911 Labour's candidate struggled to clarify what he considered the real issues, but without success.<sup>89</sup> In Kensington and Caversham township Macpherson and Arnold together won more than 60 per cent of the vote, but a local lawyer, Charles Statham, representing Reform, pipped Arnold at each one. At Berwick House, at the foot of The Glen, the two Labour men only equalled Statham, and he swept Mornington and City Rise (once 'the devil's half acre'). Disaffection with the Liberals and the old Lib-Lab strategy, together with a distrust of Macpherson as an employer, was clearly weaker in Caversham township and Rockyside than in other parts of the electorate.<sup>90</sup>

By removing Rockyside, The Glen and much of Kensington from Sidey's electorate, the Representation Commission had given him his hardest challenge for years. On The Flat MacManus ran a lively campaign. Bob Slater, who had lost his position on the Arbitration Court in 1906, played a key role in the new party despite being rejected in his bid to become the candidate for Dunedin South. Key lieutenants from the Labourers' Union also assisted MacManus. There had been an influx of labourers into the area over the past five years to extend the gasworks, expand the railway tunnel, replace the single with double tracks, and install new drainage systems. Many of them came from Britain and Australia, and they constituted almost 13 per cent of the population (the unskilled being just over 25 per cent). Thanks to MacManus, by 1911 over 80 per cent of all labourers belonged to their union (compared to 14 per cent two years earlier) and its stronghold was on The Flat. The labourers demanded a

decent family wage and regular work.<sup>91</sup> MacManus's men also paid particular attention to organising among the workers at Hillside. It may be significant that in this year for the first time Sidey's Ladies' Committee had no wives of railway workers and only six women with working-class husbands.<sup>92</sup> MacManus spoke for the coming socialist dawn when New Zealand would finally be a model to the world, but his vision of a new society easily accommodated The Flat's now traditional commitment to white New Zealand, protection for local industries, the abolition of monopoly, the right to work and a decent family wage.<sup>93</sup> Sidey also shared those commitments.



*Trades Hall, Moray Place, symbolised the civic presence of the unions and their respectability. Few civic events were now held without the T&LC being asked to assist. J. T. Paul Papers, Hocken Library.*



*The installation of new drainage and sewerage systems on The Flat saw the population of navvies and unskilled labourers increase dramatically in 1909–12. Most of them lived in the cheaper houses of South Dunedin and provided MacManus with a political base. Dunedin City Council Archives.*

MacManus flamboyantly cultivated the politics of class feeling. He ran as a worker and espoused the workers' new creed. Sidey, a lawyer and a landowner, could claim only to be the workers' friend. They nicely symbolised their ideologies in other ways. Sidey, dapper and neat, always relied on his knowledge rather than his strength; MacManus, at sixteen stone, was a born pugilist. Sidey was unobtrusive and abstemious; MacManus could be very noisy and came under fire for excessive drinking.<sup>94</sup> MacManus was of Australian Irish-Catholic origin and had not yet broken with his church, whereas Sidey, a Presbyterian, ran the Sunday school. Both candidates lived in the electorate but Sidey now resided in the family mansion at Corstorphine, after which a suburb was later named, whereas MacManus lived in a small cottage on the South Dunedin side of Cargill Road. Some of MacManus's supporters symbolised an even more dramatic choice. Steve Boreham, one of the earliest stalwarts of unionism in Otago, who had worked hard for thirty years to organise shearers in the

province, had moved to Dunedin in 1906 and listed himself in the *Directory* as a sailmaker. He played a major role in the Labourers' Union and the South Dunedin branch of the NZLP (he shifted house almost every year but usually lived in South Dunedin). Excitable, intemperate, and much given to strong drink and colourful obscenity, Boreham embodied characteristics widely attributed to the unskilled.<sup>95</sup> Not since Earnshaw's campaign against Larnach in 1890 had the issues of class been posed in such graphic terms.

MacManus gave Sidey his biggest fright since 1902 and won over 45 per cent of the vote. He took more than 60 per cent at Wesleyan and narrowly lost the other South Dunedin booths (where 56 per cent of the votes were cast), but Sidey easily won in Kensington, Caversham township, St Clair, and the now populous districts of Musselburgh and St Kilda. It seems likely that MacManus made inroads into Sidey's support among the men of the workshops but that many skilled men and masters, especially in the ununionised handicraft trades, preferred Sidey to McManus, but the composition of the Socialist Party suggests the need for caution. Socialism, at least in its evolutionary form, commanded widespread support. Hardly a person on The Flat would have disputed the idea that the expanded powers of the state over the preceding twenty years had created a more just and equal society. Apart from Boreham and his small coterie of admirers few would have disputed that the expanded powers of the state had also helped to raise the community's standards of decency and morality. For many respectable people, in fact, Boreham became a symbol of the sorts of behaviour they associated with 'the gutter'. The hegemonic status of this Liberal-Socialist ideology also meant that most believed it desirable that the state continue to expand its powers. On The Flat few people debated the speed needed and the length of the journey. Definitive proof is impossible but the intuitive regression analysis of polling booth returns suggests that most unionised working men believed the journey long, wanted more speed, and quite liked calling their ideal society socialist. But many small masters, persuaded that the development of capitalism menaced them, agreed that the Liberals had not done enough to crush monopoly and perfect democracy. In general, it seems, older masters like Thorn remained loyal to the party they had built; younger ones were more open to the vigorous agenda put forward by MacManus. By the same token older journeymen,

especially in the small trades, may have remained loyal to ‘Young Tom’ Sidey even though they hoped fervently for a new leader who would bring their Liberal party back to its true faith. It also seems likely that MacManus’s trenchant attack on Liberal failure to control the cost of living, together with his support for creches and a motherhood endowment, may have cost Sidey some of his support amongst married women.

Socialist versus Liberal sounds like an ideological Armageddon, but at this time it represented more a tension within the community’s ideology of labourism. Some circumstantial evidence suggests that the articulation of a socialist position enabled younger men—few women took any public part in these arguments—to challenge the older generation, many of whom had settled on The Flat in the 1870s, for leadership of the community. There is also slight circumstantial evidence which suggests that new arrivals found the socialist position attractive. It needs to be borne in mind, though, that northern socialists usually remarked on the ‘beastly state of contentment’ which afflicted Dunedin’s workers.<sup>96</sup> The weight of the evidence indicates, however, that MacManus drew most of his support from those residential pockets most densely occupied by the less-skilled ‘wage slaves’, most of whom belonged to and believed in union. The Arbitration Court’s increasing willingness to grant a preference clause to unions undoubtedly multiplied the number of unionists. But there cannot have been more than 800 unionists in the electorate. Even if, as seems likely, the wives of unionists usually shared their husbands’ political preferences and the belief that working folk deserved a better life, a large proportion of MacManus’s support came from masters and ununionised journeymen, many of them living in their own homes in areas such as St Clair and St Kilda, areas of considerable social mixing.

In so far as the ideology of labourism shunned theory—associated with syndicalists and socialists—Sidey was still its pragmatic champion. In Caversham he undoubtedly won a sizeable ‘friends and neighbours’ vote, but as more and more of Caversham was transferred into the Dunedin Central electorate, the Lib–Lab and then the Labour–Socialist candidates continued to win those booths. They won them narrowly, however, compared to Sidey, and Sidey’s majority in South Dunedin kept growing. His skill in distancing himself from the unpopular Prime Minister, Sir

Joseph Ward, and in assiduously promoting the interests of all his constituents, undoubtedly provided the basis of his tight grip on Dunedin South. In the city at large, however, Labour won 33 per cent of the vote.<sup>97</sup>

The local body elections of 1913 throw further light on The Flat's political alignments. Labour, encouraged by its success in 1911, set out to assert its right to a voice in municipal affairs. Ironically, Otago's unions broke ranks with the national movement. Some 180 carpenters turned out to hear Warren report on the July 'Unity' conference 'with very great attention'. After a referendum the members affiliated with the United Labour Party, now virtually defunct outside Dunedin. The Tailoresses also affiliated and a branch was formed on The Flat.<sup>98</sup> Slater and Munro, the Socialist, contested Caversham ward (which now had five seats on the council). Although the local party's platform stressed such issues as 'municipal control of all community enterprises' and town planning as an antidote for slums, the two men emphasised concessions to municipal employees, including a minimum wage of ten shillings a day. They polled quite well but ran only seventh and eighth in a field of twelve. The ratepayers preferred successful masters to run local affairs.<sup>99</sup>

'Big Bill' Belcher's decision to contest the mayoralty as an 'Independent Labour' candidate stole the limelight. Belcher, the tough secretary of both the Dunedin and the national Seamen's Union, 'appears to have the knowledge of Socialism ... tempered with the spirit of compromise ... that would almost seem characteristic of the Dunedin Unionists'. He had served no apprenticeship on the council, as his opponents quickly pointed out (he had served two terms as the government's appointee on the Harbour Board, where he had won a reputation for frank speech and independence). His campaign was in character. He pledged no 'hot air' and 'no speechifying'. While his opponents, William Downie Stewart and The Flat's Frank Shacklock, elaborated their visions—Shacklock saw The Flat as the Dominion's most populous area and Dunedin's retail centre—the 'old whale' confined his campaign to an evening of musical entertainments.



## Bill Belcher's Address to the Deal

(in Furniture).

*Thompson's Sketcher portrays 'Big Bill' Belcher as an honest and courageous working man—he had not dressed like this since he had given up the sea in the 1880s—scattering the well-dressed wimps from 'Bond Street', heart of the city's banking and mercantile district and, on The Flat, a metaphor for parasites.*

Although Belcher never lived on The Flat his candidacy won surprising support. He pipped Shacklock at the Kensington and Caversham booths (but Stewart took St Clair). In South Dunedin Belcher closely trailed

Shacklock, but the two men easily beat Stewart at every booth. Stewart did better elsewhere and won the mayoralty but Belcher came second. He boasted “that I put up a pretty good fight—(cheers)—for one who never served his apprenticeship” (Laughter and cheers)’.<sup>100</sup> The exclusionary policies of skilled workers, centred on apprenticeship, clearly had rhetorical significance. Socialists addressed the issue by predicting the disappearance of craft.

#### IV

The elections of 1914 and 1919 confirm the importance of class in national politics (the boundary shifted sharply between these elections). The Liberals and Labour–Socialists forged an electoral alliance in Dunedin for the 1914 elections in order to defeat Reform. It is not clear what The Flat’s branch of the United Labour Party, let alone the Tailoresses or the ASC&J, thought of the arrangement. Nobody complained. As the only Liberal MP left in Dunedin—Reform candidates had captured the other three city seats—Sidey played a prominent role in securing this alliance. J. T. Paul, the most influential labour leader in the city, joined Sidey and Dunedin’s leading Socialist, Munro, to announce and explain the new Lib–Lab deal.<sup>101</sup> Reform nominated one Thomas H. Dalton to contest Sidey’s seat. He lost no time in describing himself as ‘a working man’ and claimed that Reform ‘has ... shewn its sympathy with the workers’.<sup>102</sup> Such claims cut no ice on The Flat after the 1913 strike, when ‘Massey’s Cossacks’ had been camped at Tahuna Park. When Massey, Reform’s leader and the country’s Prime Minister, spoke on Dalton’s behalf in the South Dunedin Town Hall a riotous crowd heckled him mercilessly.

Sidey trounced Dalton and the luckless Reformer carried only two booths, St Clair (by a whisker) and a small booth in Green Island Bush. Jubilant celebrations occurred that night in Caversham and the local band paraded. Dalton, gracious in defeat, received his most attentive hearing of the campaign. In the city’s other electorates the coalition also did very well. Andrew Walker, a typographer and a prominent Baptist, carried North, while the Socialist Party’s Munro pipped Reform’s Statham in Central by fourteen votes, or that is how it looked until the returning officer reversed

the result. Munro won only six of the fourteen booths but comfortably carried his Kensington booth and the booth in Caversham township. In Sidey's booths support for Reform ranged from a low of 25 per cent in South Dunedin up to 40 per cent in St Kilda. In his two Caversham booths it won about 33 per cent. Reform fared no better in Caversham township, but it narrowly took the booth at the foot of The Glen. The *Evening Star* exulted: 'Moderate Labor has triumphed in Otago'. Yet 'Moderate Labor', as the recently formed Otago Labour Council had affirmed in March 1914, proposed to 'consolidate their industrial and political power ... until all private monopoly is extinguished and the means of production, distribution, and exchange shall be socially owned and operated for the common good of all'.<sup>[103](#)</sup>

## DUNEDIN SOUTH ELECTORATE



**Hon. J. T. PAUL,**  
**THE LABOUR CANDIDATE**

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*J. T. Paul, President of the New Zealand Labour Party, Legislative Councillor 1906–19 and 1935–51. He moved the motion to establish the Political Labour League in 1904 but was also a member of the Land Values League, the National Defence League and the WEA. J. T. Paul Papers, Hocken Library.*

The war had begun when voters went to the polls in 1914. Although war issues dominated the Dunedin Central by-election in early 1915, held after Statham resigned to ensure a fair fight with Munro, and the 1919 elections as well, they consolidated the basic alignments and made a new form of working-class consciousness more general.<sup>104</sup> This implied no lack of enthusiasm for the war. Men from the building trades and the workshops responded eagerly to the Empire's call for volunteers. Some 143 members of the ASC&J joined up, seventeen of them from The Flat (and six from Caversham). By June 1916 some 110 men at the workshops had

volunteered, almost 90 per cent of them ASRS members (another seventy went from the workshops before the war ended).<sup>105</sup> It is not clear how many labourers joined up but MacManus went and the extraordinary level of commitment among the men from the workshops must have affected the community's mood. In the workshops, churches and lodges each departure for military service became the occasion for a farewell party. The men at Hillside subscribed to a Roll of Honour to commemorate 'in artistic form the splendid part played by the members of the workshops staff in the war'. The unveiling ceremony saw the entire staff turn out to honour their mates who had offered to make the final sacrifice to uphold 'Civilisation' in its struggle with 'Prussian Barbarism'. The skilled men had not been duped by a ruling class, assuming that one could be located, for they had woven the values of civilisation—the rule of law, fairness and justice, democracy, co-operation—into the very fabric of their work, their community and their lives.<sup>106</sup>

Hillside's lively patriotism did not preclude debate over major wartime issues. Most of those issues centred on the notion of fairness. Unlike the northern unions, the Otago Labour Council (OLC), from the beginning, strongly supported the war, the voluntary system, and local recruiting campaigns. In December 1915, just as the OLC refused to support a national campaign to convene an anti-conscription conference, controversy erupted on The Flat. James Allen, Massey's deputy, visited the workshops, probably because of a rumour about increasing resistance on The Flat to appeals for volunteers. He later told the press that many men said that they would not volunteer for fear that 'shirkers' would get their jobs.<sup>107</sup> It is not known how many men attended Allen's meeting but the press report roused a storm. The workshops' manager refused the men permission to hold a protest meeting in the workshops but his 'tyranny' only produced a still larger crowd which mustered in a paddock nearby to hear Professor Bedford, the local boy made good. Bedford did not disappoint them. He excoriated the workshops' manager before discussing 'Conscription of Men and Wealth':

I believe that in a war like this the principle of compulsory service should be applied to wealth as well as to men. Every single penny of war profit should be taken for the war. Today we have the spectacle of many men dying for the noblest cause for which swords can be drawn, and many growing fat, sleek, and infinitely rich by exploiting that cause.

The voluntary system, he concluded, 'is too laggard. We lost Gallipoli through it.' It was also unfair and eugenically unsound. After hearing Bedford, the meeting resolved that government, if it conscripted men, had to conscript wealth and make adequate provision for the dependants of the dead and wounded.<sup>[108](#)</sup> No other issue polarised the choice between human values and money so clearly. To the fury of the men the press did not deem this meeting newsworthy. There may have been more involved, however, for in 1916 leading ladies formed a branch of the Women's National Reserve and offered to tackle the jobs of any men who volunteered.<sup>[109](#)</sup>



*This snapshot of J. T. Paul and his daughter reminds us of the profound split between public and private worlds. Paul was born near Boort, Victoria, in 1874. He served his apprenticeship as a compositor, married a grocer's daughter and migrated to Dunedin in 1899. Methodism and the labour movement were his abiding commitments, together with his family. His moderation and gentleness irritated some and there was widespread criticism when Massey re-appointed him to the Legislative Council in 1914. Hocken Library.*

In the winter of 1916 the government enacted conscription and the various factions of the labour movement formed the second New Zealand Labour Party. As president of the new party Paul found himself straddling a minefield.<sup>110</sup> The new party opposed conscription of men unless the government conscripted wealth and demanded that the measure be repealed at once. Yet a majority of the Labour Council, while accepting that wealth should be conscripted and preferring ‘the voluntary system’, had no desire to see the war lost for want of men and believed that organised labour should be represented on the Military

Service Board (charged with hearing appeals from men who believed they had good grounds for exemption). Paul and another union leader, Edward Kellett of the ASC&J, agreed to serve. Northern socialists saw this as further evidence that southern ‘unions seem to be in a bad state of respectability’. McCarthy, of the Social Democrat Party, the most socialist in the country damned the local Council ‘as reactionary as ever ...’. The Carpenters’ Union, like many others, simply ordered ‘all correspondence dealing with that question [conscription] to lay on the table ...’. There was some confusion, however, for they denounced the Military Service Board as a ‘Secret Tribunal’ but later rejoiced at Kellett’s appointment. They also subscribed to the *Maoriland Worker* but cancelled the subscription when they discovered its disloyalty. Leading members of the Social Democrat Party, of course, opposed the war.<sup>111</sup>

Within the city the storm continued but men struggled to achieve unity (the formation of a National Government had further eroded whatever support the Liberals had as a party). The Otago Labour Council convened a meeting of the factions to set up yet another Labour Representation Committee to affiliate with the NZLP. Kellett, having been elected vice-president, then resigned because he objected to the party’s commitment to repeal conscription (the ASC&J remained affiliated and Kellett ceased being secretary).<sup>112</sup> Kellett may have had wind of the fact that Paul, Walker and sixteen other national leaders of the Labour Party had signed a message to the Australian voters urging them to ‘Vote No, and strike a blow for Liberty’, when they voted in their referendum on conscription. The release of this message sent shock waves through the city. Three members of the Patriotic and Welfare Committee resigned because Paul still belonged. The

Labour Council, after a fiery meeting and many threats of physical violence, narrowly failed to repudiate Paul and Walker but disaffiliated from the LRC. Boreham bitterly attacked the disloyalists and his union, the Cordial Workers, left the Labour Council and the LRC.<sup>113</sup> In December, to the relief of many, including Hillside and the Carpenters, Paul called for 'National Service'. He now defended his stance on conscription in terms of the need 'for equality of sacrifice during this great war'.<sup>114</sup>

Battle raged through Christmas, but in 1917 Fred Jones, the Caversham clicker, became president of the Labour Council and the LRC, while L. F. Evans (of the ASC&J) replaced the long-serving secretary, Bob Breen, who resigned in high dudgeon. They used their skill at negotiation to persuade the warring factions that the Labour Party's good work should not be destroyed by a quarrel over whether to repeal conscription. In April the Labour Council reaffiliated with the LRC, although one third of the delegates opposed, but in June the LRC decided to seek the deletion of the clause seeking the repeal of conscription. Instead, they urged, the party should pledge itself to 'The establishment of National Service on lines which exact an equitable measure of service and sacrifice from every adult member of the community'. The party's national conference rejected the proposal and Evans furiously denounced the party. Talk of secession flourished once more but calmer counsels prevailed.<sup>115</sup>

Unionists and Labour supporters in Caversham and The Flat divided in much the same way as those in the city. Neither the Hillside ASRS nor the Carpenters commented on Paul's anti-conscription message to the Australians but when three members of the Otago Patriotic and Welfare Committee resigned rather than serve with him, the Hillside branch supported Paul (although three attempts to amend the motion suggest division).<sup>116</sup> 'Equality of sacrifice can never be', Hillside resolved in February 1917, 'but a nearer approach to equity could be....' The union's national executive insisted that 'Conscription, properly applied, is a democratic method of securing complete national service'. The Dunedin ASC&J wavered. The branch remained affiliated to the LRC and its delegates played a large role but it again refused to send a delegate to the anti-conscription conference. Although the Labourers appear to have borne the brunt of conscription, for 114 members were on active service and

another 105 were in camp by June 1918, Boreham still had but one goal, the defeat of Germany and the destruction of 'Prussian militarism'. It is significant, however, that Sidey began to urge that 'We could not send away many more men without seriously reducing the food production of this country' and making it difficult to guarantee that returned servicemen could return to their old jobs. There are signs, in short, that The Flat gave less support to the Labour Party's position on conscription than other working-class areas although almost everyone wanted conscription of wealth as well as men.<sup>117</sup> Opposition grew in 1917, as conscription bit and wealth remained untouched, but it seems to have grown most among members of the Labourers' Union.

The main wartime issue, surprisingly, was six o'clock closing. The citizens of The Flat flocked in great numbers to sign the petition in 1917 demanding six o'clock closing of hotels as 'A "Win the War" Measure'. At a public meeting in the South Dunedin Town Hall old Warren of the ASC&J moved the motion of support. Caversham's rising boot clicker, Fred Jones of Playfair Street, seconded it, pointing out that only the Seamen's and the Hotel Workers' Unions opposed. Boreham led the noisy opposition but lost heavily on a show of hands. The *Times* now used him as a symbol of the rabble-raising disorder that most people wanted destroyed (despite his intemperate patriotism). He had his supporters, of course, but argued that six o'clock closing would encourage 'sly-grog houses, keg parties, home drinking, and other evils ...'. To this sad state had The Flat's drinking men been reduced when they spoke in public. In private, however, Boreham damned his enemies as 'fanatics'.<sup>118</sup> Yet when the executive of the Hillside branch of the ASRS voted to support the campaign the next meeting saw a record attendance almost unanimously repudiate the decision. Other issues had become entangled with liquor. The Labour Party used six o'clock closing to popularise its commitment to direct democracy and to demand a general election (Massey and Ward had postponed the next one until after the war).<sup>119</sup> The party may also have been keen to appeal to those women who considered it more important to have moral rather than economic reform.

Issues relating to gender and class still sat uncomfortably together. Support for temperance—a concept which translated into many keys—

continued to proved many Labour supporters with a bridge between the belief that the labour market generated all significant inequalities and the idea that human irresponsibility was just as (if not more) important. In Caversham, unlike South Dunedin, most of Labour's leaders supported temperance or prohibition even if they did not always agree with New Zealand Alliance on every issue (this reflected, in exaggerated form, the popular vote).<sup>120</sup> News (and rumours) about the incidence of venereal diseases among 'our boys' would only have strengthened people in thinking that men ought to obey the same sexual standards as women. Anybody of illegitimate birth would have felt this intensely. So would many men, such as Pinkerton and Paul, who had only daughters. The women of The Flat did not take to the streets over such issues, although a few formed the Women's Christian Temperance Union and large numbers worked hard through their churches and lodges. Whatever tensions existed, most skilled men now saw themselves as family men, a new phrase which denoted their domestication. Even 'the boys' at war were portrayed as 'gentlemen' and 'family men' (quite unlike the dominant Australian image of their men). The more ideologically committed, although usually abstemious themselves and critical of men like Boreham, saw this sustained and complex struggle to redefine 'manliness' as an irrelevance. In 1916 Arthur McCarthy, whose sister (a teacher) was one of the few feminist-socialists in the city, poured cold water on the proposed visit from Adela Pankhurst, the famous English suffragette who had taken Melbourne by storm. Such women, he said, had no interest in the 'real aims of the SDP ...'.<sup>121</sup> Besides, the war further legitimised separate spheres. It was inconceivable that women would fight and after the terrible casualties of 1916–17 everyone agreed that motherhood had become a civic duty.<sup>122</sup>

Wartime inflation also emerged as a political problem and sharpened the community's preoccupation with equity (the cost of living was widely seen as a women's issue, although it had obvious implications for the family wage). In 1915 the price of wheat and bread became the symbolic focus for the entire debate on The Flat. The rapid rise in the price of flour, the ASC&J resolved, 'is nothing less than a National Scandal'. The government imported wheat, to the disgust of unionists, and established a Board of Trade to control prices. Passions soared when the Board fixed a price for

wheat and farmers refused to plant any. The LRC urged government to force farmers to plant wheat, as it had forced strikers back to work, and to set maximum prices. The cost-of-living issue exploded again in 1917, especially among railway workers (for they had withdrawn their pay claim when war began and now felt both disadvantaged and cheated). Wheat and bread prices again symbolised the issues. When Allen told an ASRS deputation that the government was helpless, the deputation told him to nationalise the farms. When he asked whether they thought nationalisation of the country's farms practicable, they replied with one voice, 'Yes we do, Sir'. Hillside added its voice to the chorus, unanimously insisting 'that farmers be compelled to sow a portion ... in wheat, and that the Government take over the whole of the wheat grown...'.<sup>123</sup> Nor did they wait for government to act. In 1914 Hillside's long-serving secretary, Andrew Melville, a moulder who lived on Main South Road, took the initiative in organising a co-operative Railway Association. This Association organised discounts for members and appears to have done some bulk-buying. Wartime inflation helped recruit 656 members by July 1916. They boasted that civilisation was built by co-operation.<sup>124</sup>

## V

Despite continuing discontent with government the growth in the power of the state to cope with the crisis of war helped to legitimise the central premise of state socialism. England, according to *Railway Review*, 'is so nearly Socialist that the Socialists can find no fault with it'. War was the health of the state (it also increased popular suspicion of aliens and confirmed the dependent and domestic position of women).<sup>125</sup> The war also loosed a tidal wave of expectations. Massey's government actually greatly extended its control of the economy. Rent controls and price fixing became widespread. Within the congealing parameters of socialist discourse, however, the centralisation of Capital and the menace of dilution seemed more striking than the growth of state power. The leading men of all the local factions and the main unions on The Flat began to talk the language of industrial unionism. 'One Big Union must come', wrote one. 'Modern Conditions will force it. Modern Machinery will eventually do away with

the Craftsman and replace him by the Machinist.' Paul, who had once dismissed such talk as 'bunkum', agreed in 1917 that 'the old craft form of organisation is passing.... Just as modern industry has grown into larger single undertakings, so has the organisation of Labour and Capital developed.'<sup>126</sup> The organisation of war confirmed the point, as innumerable commentators remarked at the time, just as it gave a new emphasis to standardisation, equality, and the idea that men and women belonged in separate spheres.

After the United States entered the war in April 1917 President Woodrow Wilson's justification of the conflict in terms of democracy and a new world order heightened expectations. On The Flat (as in the country generally) unionists yearned for labour's unity. At the same time Guild Socialism, G. D. H. Cole's clever synthesis of syndicalism and socialism, made industrial unions central to the achievement of a new social order based on worker control of industry but placed less emphasis on class war than the Red Feds had. Cole's idea, self-consciously drawing on Ruskin and Morris, captured the imagination of 'conservative' carpenters and 'revolutionary' miners. Local unionists responded by demanding worker control, affiliating with the Workers' Education Association, and renewing their efforts to form industrial unions. In 1916–17 the ASC&J devoted great energy to forming a Building Trades Federation and joined with other unions in organising a Central Labour Office (their secretary, Evans, became secretary-organiser for the new office). Many socialists saw the Central Labour Office as the 'first step [towards] One Big Union' and a system of universal clearances (which promised to eliminate craft sectionalism). In 1916 the ASRS unsuccessfully sought amalgamation with the Engine Drivers', Cleaners' and Firemen's Union and joined the syndicalist Transport Workers' Advisory Board. In 1919 Otago ASRS affiliated with the Otago district of the Board but Hillside remained aloof until the influx of men from Maintenance and Way transformed the branch in 1920. The Tailoresses, to Jane Runciman's disgust, also voted themselves out of existence and merged with male clothing workers. Aided by the Bolshevik revolution, the ferment had crystallised and generalised a new and more Marxist understanding of class. Some unions joined international organisations.<sup>127</sup>

It would be a mistake to assume that increased acceptance of socialism and industrial unionism meant any enthusiasm for the second New Zealand Labour Party in 1917–18. Men and women sought non-political solutions to the problems posed by inflation, such as co-operatives and ‘linking-up’ movements, and bemoaned the lack of a patriotic Labour Party.<sup>128</sup> The tradesmen at Hillside, still smarting over the defeat of their attempt to secede from the ASRS, disliked the Labour Party’s disloyalty. A well-attended meeting of the same branch congratulated the national secretary, Joe Mack, when he contested the Wellington Central by-election as an Independent to defeat the candidate of ‘official Labour’, Peter Fraser, who had been convicted of ‘sedition’. When Mack turned up in Dunedin a few days later the Hillside executive organised an open meeting in their social hall. The questions flew fast and furious, especially about his connections with the Protestant Political Association. He evaded that issue, insisted on his right to join any organisation he liked, and outlined his platform to ‘rounds of applause’. The meeting rewarded Mack’s virtuoso performance with a motion of confidence and deplored ‘the action of certain of our Branches [including Otago] in condemning him’ before hearing him.<sup>129</sup> Hillside, unlike Otago ASRS, the Labourers and the ASC&J, did not affiliate to the Labour Party, preferring ‘strong men who will adequately represent labour’.<sup>130</sup>

It is impossible to know whether the skilled men of the metal trades played much part in the Hillside branch. Most of the officers came from the foundry, the ranks of the casuals, and small trades (such as the patternmakers and tinsmiths). But if the skilled men had entertained strongly divergent views on the Labour Party it is unlikely that they would have remained quiet. The number of questions addressed to Mack concerning rumours about his relationship to the PPA suggest, however, that sectarian issues may have had some salience in the workshops in 1917–19. Sectarianism had a considerable impact on government departments which employed large numbers of Catholics.<sup>131</sup> Although there were not many Catholic tradesmen at Hillside, Catholics may have been well represented among the skilled labourers and not averse to exploiting the wartime shortage of skilled men to break into overwhelmingly Protestant trades. This is speculation, but the number of labourers in South Dunedin’s

Catholic population and the high proportion of skilled men who belonged to a Protestant church make it plausible to conclude that the issue of dilution could assume a sectarian guise. Mack's reception suggests that the PPA enjoyed some sympathy (if not support) at Hillside and on The Flat generally. Mabel Cartwright's 'Diary' also indicates the suspicion and fear of Catholics that existed even among completely lapsed Protestants. Sectarian suspicions could have made the Labour Party even more suspect at a time when its leaders were vigorously courting Irish Catholic support, especially in an area where working men already enjoyed considerable political influence. Both Dunedin's Catholic papers, the *Tablet* and *Green Ray*, supported the revolutionary nationalist party, Sinn Fein, and inflamed sectarian tensions further. Besides, many unionists disliked the Labour Party's Red Fed leaders, especially those who sat during the National Anthem.<sup>132</sup> Edward Kellett spoke for many when he ran in Dunedin North as 'Independent Labour' in 1919 and defeated the Labour Party's Andrew Walker.

In 1919 the president of the Labour Party, Dunedin's J. T. Paul, determined to win at least three of the city's seats. When Sidey announced his retirement Paul entered the lists for Dunedin South (the new boundaries swung on to the Taieri plain and put Parkside and the rest of Kensington in Dunedin Central). He defeated MacManus and Loydall (of the ASC&J) in the selection ballot and resigned from the Legislative Council. Labour developed an effective campaign organisation based on newly formed branches of the party in Caversham and South Dunedin and 'men belonging to the union'.<sup>133</sup> To Paul's consternation Sidey then changed his mind, doubtless on the insistence of those who saw Paul as a traitor. In South Dunedin and St Kilda Sidey's men organised to meet the challenge but his oldest lieutenants, Rutherford and Taverner, thought it unnecessary to do much beside check the rolls in Caversham and St Clair.<sup>134</sup> Paul and Sidey knew each other well, they gave similar answers to all the organisations which sent questionnaires (such as the Protestant Political Association and the Returned Servicemen), but it was a torrid campaign. Sidey made one major speech in defence of his own record and the achievements of the Liberals. Paul worked hard but was often heckled because of Labour's opposition to conscription during the war. 'There are numerous Paulites',

one of Sidey's informers wrote, '... but there are people here [in Green Island] whose sons were in the trenches when he was preaching against conscription.' This informant advised Sidey 'to make a strong point of combating Trusts, the American Meat Trust especially'.<sup>135</sup>

The result confirms the centrality of class in generating voting patterns and also the continuing importance of the handicraft trades. St Clair voted overwhelmingly for Sidey while Kensington gave Paul 60 per cent. The township divided, Forbury Corner going to Paul with 52.6 per cent while the Presbyterian hall, a much smaller booth, went to Sidey with 60.7 per cent. The township, the heart of the handicraft trades, preferred Sidey to Paul but, given that he had lived there all his life, Paul polled quite well. The absence of Reform undoubtedly contributed to Sidey's success in St Clair and may have allowed him to hold his seat, for he won by only eighty-four votes. Much of the old Caversham borough was now in Central and had to choose between Statham and Munro. Rockyside, to the north of the Main South Road, chose Munro (58.4 per cent), St Peter's (57.8 per cent) and the Oddfellows' booth in Kensington (70 per cent) following suit. Only the booth at the foot of The Glen voted for Statham (55.7 per cent), but so too did Mornington, Musselburgh and Andersons Bay, and Statham won the election once more. It seems likely that among the men and women of the handicraft trades, few of whom were unionised, Labour's association with treachery cost it dearly. In those parts of the electorate where unionists were thick on the ground, Labour's wartime position on conscription only strengthened its hold. In this election, for the first time, the unionised and the non-unionised divided, but the divisive issue seems to have been Labour's wartime stance on conscription. Although quite a few railway workers may have voted for Sidey, and on industrial issues he voted with the Labour Party in Parliament, pro-war unionists seemed willing to believe that opposition to conscription did not mean disloyalty. Journeymen and masters in ununionised industries were less charitable. Both would have argued that they stood for equality.

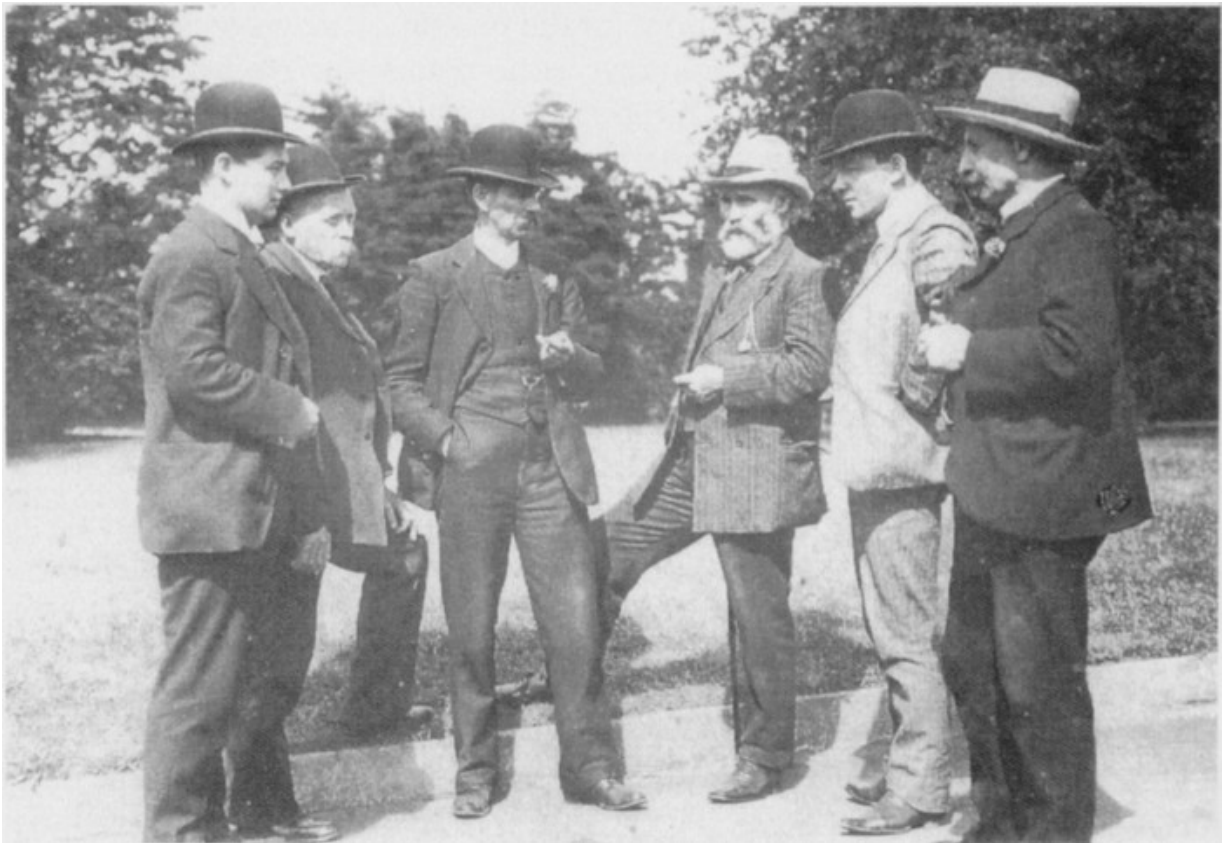
## VI

Political choices cannot be isolated from the wider social and cultural

context. Unions had assumed a new significance and the meaning of union had changed as men (and the omission of women is deliberate) came to believe that the concentration of Capital had accelerated. Craft unions had become anachronisms. The war instilled new ideas about organisation, co-ordination and discipline, just as the Bolshevik revolution heralded the possibility of sweeping social change. The Otago Labour Council took the initiative in ending the United Federation of Labour, organised around craft and locality, and founding the Alliance of Labour. In 1920 it reorganised itself on industrial lines.<sup>136</sup> The tradesmen in the workshops had their doubts about aspects of the new faith but Arthur McCarthy, one of the fiery socialists, increasingly felt that ‘I have not had the full confidence of either the SDP or the [*Maoriland*] Worker’s staff, and as an employer do not see that I can fairly claim it’.<sup>137</sup> Before long he dropped out of the movement and even Silverstone, after becoming an employer, resigned from the LRC (he had been subjected to a lot of abuse, much of it anti-semitic).

There had been no change in the mode of production or in class structure, either in the city or on The Flat (let alone in Caversham), but a new discourse had been widely accepted. That discourse excluded the masters of handicraft trades from the working class and defined the trades themselves as an irrelevance. True, the incidence of movement from skilled trades to self-employment had declined, but scarcely enough to explain the radicalisation of skilled unionists and the re-definition of class to exclude masters (although it is possible that the war heightened the sense of social rigidity). The passage of time—for many Caversham masters had achieved that status almost thirty years earlier—may have made older masters less tolerant of more aggressive unions and radical socialism. The experience of the carpenters, however, suggests the need for caution. People increasingly voted according to these new ideas; however, that said, craft or skill remained important in the organisation of work and society and even the most ideologically committed still struggled to retain local autonomy. The less committed insisted on it. But the new socialism absorbed the old labourism. Old Warren of the ASC&J, an enthusiast for Labour and industrial unionism, still insisted that ‘Man is a land animal, and cannot live without land ...’.<sup>138</sup> In Caversham and on The Flat old faiths and local pride remained powerful, although now marginal in the new discourse

centred on class.



*Socialists in New Zealand gained considerable advantage from the fact that most socialists in other countries, including Britain, were still demanding the sort of reforms already enacted here. In this photograph the famous Keir Hardie chats with a group of Dunedin socialists, J. T. Paul stands on the left and Mark Silverstone on the right. Hocken Library.*

Thanks to the war and the Bolshevik revolution, Marx's messianic teleology had imprinted itself upon the phrase working class. Few on The Flat would

have called themselves Marxists, let alone Bolsheviks (although from 1919 onwards you could go and hear Communists speak in the Exchange on Saturday nights, not fifteen minutes walk from The Oval). But then most people on The Flat had come to believe in the proposition that a just social order would be organised so that each gave according to his means and received according to his needs. And that was Marx's definition of his communist utopia. Increasing numbers, especially among the young, also now believed that the laws of capitalist development made socialism inevitable. That idea can also be traced back to Marx. In short, the political

and social traditions of Caversham and The Flat, under the impact of a growing perception that capitalism created class difference—declining real wages, profiteering, conscription—moved the political centre of the labour movement locally towards a more radical discourse centred on class in the singular. Increasing numbers believed that capitalism had become incompatible with the dignity of labour; that only a radical transformation of society would end the material and symbolic oppression of workers. Men and some women who lived in communities such as The Flat and belonged to unions proved most susceptible to the new idea. The union, in short, had become decisive.<sup>[139](#)</sup>

## VII

Although wartime issues deeply divided the labour movement on The Flat and in Dunedin generally, the post-war depression of 1921–22 brought all the unions into line behind the Labour Party. The government's two wage cuts outraged the men of the workshops. Although the ASRS refused to affiliate with Labour, many branches, including Hillside, finally decided to link up. The branch began sending delegates to the Labour Representation Committee and levied members in support of the party's campaign for the 1922 election.<sup>[140](#)</sup> Paul, now editor of the *Otago Witness*, refused to stand again despite the earnest entreaties of the ASC&J, the Labourers, and such leaders as Jones and the once-fiery Scot, John Gilchrist, late of the defunct SDP and now secretary of the LRC.<sup>[141](#)</sup>

In Parliament and on the stump Labour Party leaders fought the wage cuts strenuously. Sidey, never one to be out flanked, voted with the Labour Party consistently. His own popularity and his willingness to work very hard on behalf of his constituents enabled him to keep sufficient working-class support to retain his seat. In 1922, when he comfortably beat MacManus again (the old firebrand took only Wesleyan on Cargill Road decisively, and got only 20 per cent in St Clair). In Central, Gilchrist swept South Dunedin and Kensington, lost Parkside with only 46 per cent, and carried the Main South Road booth with about 52 per cent. Elsewhere, Statham beat him easily. Gilchrist did worst in those booths which gave prohibition its strongest support, and best where prohibition did worst. So

did MacManus, except that Wesleyan on Cargill Road, in the poorest area, gave him and prohibition 60 per cent of the vote. Skilled men who believed in their Protestantism, and especially their wives, appear to have been joining those in ununionised trades in seeking a political alternative to Labour. It is not easy to be sure, however, for in 1919—with many of ‘the boys’ still away—the pattern had been much less clear cut. Not that it mattered much for Statham was now the Speaker and Sidey continued to vote with Labour on matters affecting The Flat’s unions.<sup>142</sup> When he finally stood down in 1928 another Liberal, James B. Taverner, replaced him. Like Sidey he was the son of a carpenter made good. In 1931, with the onset of the ‘Great Depression’, Fred Jones finally carried the Labour Party to victory in Dunedin South.

The length of Sidey’s incumbency must not disguise the fact that a fundamental consensus of values prevailed on The Flat throughout this period. Not that consensus precluded conflict: conflict, in fact, strengthened consensus. By 1919 few would have cared to quarrel with the idea that government ought to promote employment, guarantee regular work for men at rates of pay sufficient to support families in decency, protect the integrity of skilled trades, exclude women and any other ‘cheap’ labour from men’s jobs, and look after the casualties, whether widows or injured men. At the heart of that culture and ideology was the autonomous and independent artisan or tradesman, proud of his skill, the equal of anyone (and perhaps more equal than some). He could only survive, unionists believed, if socialism replaced capitalism and production for use replaced production for profit. Thanks to political success he remained in control of the labour process; fear of losing control converted him to industrial unionism and socialism. Despite the rhetoric of the ideologues, however, localism, craft and co-operation remained at the heart of his political culture. The continuing importance of the masters and journeymen of the handicraft trades provided a sheet anchor for that perspective.

The relationship between women and the new meaning of class had become still more problematic. The war had rendered women’s dependence normative and obligatory. Even before that catastrophic conflict the new ideology of socialism had defined significant inequalities as a product of the labour market and affirmed that married women did not belong there (a

view by no means peculiar to supporters of socialism or Labour). The political language which became dominant assumed the exclusion of women from the labour market and defined as women's issues such matters as child rearing, child care and the cost of living. The women of Caversham and The Flat do not seem to have complained but nor did they evince any public acceptance of their confinement. In other industrial suburbs of New Zealand the wives of union leaders formed Housewives' Unions; there is no evidence that one ever existed locally. The idea of taking over men's jobs so that they could go to war briefly roused some local enthusiasm, but it was a red rag to the men. The word dilution had always evoked the possibility that women would take men's jobs. Each word and phrase in the new socialist discourse—mechanisation, working class, dilution—symbolised that possibility even as it obscured it. The war merely confirmed it, but it was an extraordinarily powerful confirmation. If any woman thought that she had problems peculiar to her sex then the new discourse insisted that only under socialism would they be solved.<sup>143</sup>

This 'thick description' of politics in Caversham between the mobilisation of the 1880s and the 1920s has plotted the way in which new meanings were constructed for old words and new words and concepts came into use. The autonomous craftsman's sense of his manhood—a progressively more sober and less violent manhood—shaped these changes. The 'family wage' produced the working man as a 'family man', his wife at home managing the house and looking after his children. This exclusion became normative and seems to have been accepted by all, for by 1910–11 even unskilled men demanded a 'family wage'. The construction of socialism as a red-hot set of proposals for reconstructing society and economy, a process largely complete on The Flat by 1919, assumed this exclusion and left the men of ununionised trades and the wives of all working men open to other political appeals. No new vocabulary existed to describe and classify these consequences. Nor did any vocabulary exist to describe the exclusion of the Chinese, largely effected by 1900, or the more complex trade-off between skilled and unskilled. Certainty is impossible, but just as skilled men of the workshops may have accepted the erosion of pay differentials in return for being left in control of the labour process, so they may have joined the unskilled in demanding red-hot socialism as part

of the deal. If this is so, then the continuities controlled the changes, because the desire to retain their ‘manly independence’ always shaped their political responses. If the unionised skilled men felt the need to strike a deal with the unskilled, most of whom unionised between 1909 and 1912, the unionised men of the handicraft trades had no such need. The decisive difference between the two groups of skilled men—and the explanation for their different political behaviour—may well have been the extent to which their ‘unskilled’ helpers had unionised, because the unions of the unskilled accepted the right of the skilled to control the labour process. It is also possible—although the idea cannot be pursued here—that this deal was part of a larger and more complex compact about the standards of behaviour appropriate at home and in public space.

### Notes

[1](#) See Pierre Bordieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge, 1977, p. 170.

[2](#) See Patricia Grimshaw, *Women’s Suffrage in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1972; Raewyn Dalziel, ‘The Colonial Helpmeet: Women’s Role and the Vote in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 11 (Oct. 1977), pp. 112–23; and Dorothy Page, ‘Introduction’, in *The Suffragists: Women Who Worked for the Vote: Essays from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Wellington, 1993, pp. 1–23. I have explored this tension in ‘Women, Work and Family: 1880–1926’, in Bunkle and Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, pp. 173–81.

[3](#) Edward Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, New York, 1976, Part 4 and especially pp. 641–54, 682–98.

[4](#) ODT, 28 May 1891, p. 3.

[5](#) His essay on ‘Civilization’, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, v. 18, *Essays on Politics and Society*, edited by J. M. Robson, Toronto, 1977, p. 122.

[6](#) OW, 15 Aug. 1891, p. 4.

[7](#) Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 68–69 makes the point about the two capitals. For the quotation see Fish’s comments in Trustees of the Otago Benevolent Institution, *Annual Report*, Dunedin, 1891, p. 13.

[8](#) Pharos, *Some Historical Articles on Communism and Socialism: Their*

*Dreams, The Experiments, Their Aims, Their Influence*, Christchurch, 1890.

[9](#) OW, 30 Aug. 1890, p. 3.

[10](#) OW, 11 Oct. 1890, p. 4 and 13 Dec. 1890, p. 2.

[11](#) OW, 7 Oct. 1893, p. 6.

[12](#) OW, 18 Feb. 1893, p. 1.

[13](#) OW, 3 June 1893, p. 3 and 20 April 1895, p. 6. For romanticism see J. Mendilow, *The Romantic Tradition in British Political Thought*, London, 1986, ch. 6.

[14](#) ODT, 6 Nov. 1893, cited by P. A. Mitchell, 'John Andrew Millar and the New Zealand Labour Movement', MA thesis, OU, 1947, pp. 68–69.

[15](#) J. E. Sharfe, 'The Canterbury Workers' Educational Association: the Origins and Development 1915–1947: A Working Class Organisation?', MA thesis, Canterbury, 1989, pp. 13–14 and Elvin Hatch, 'The Girl Warne and Mrs Egan: Class Consciousness and Moral Belief in South Canterbury in 1890', unpublished paper (kindly lent by the author).

[16](#) OW, 15 Dec. 1894, p. 1 and 4 Jan. 1896, p. 7.

[17](#) OW, 1 April 1893, p. 6. For his break with Fish see Turner, 'Henry Smith Fish', pp. 60, 67, 86–87.

[18](#) 'The Platform of the Workers' Political Committee, Otago: 15 November 1893', 'Political [Clippings], 1901–11', Stewart MSS; and ODT, 11 Aug. 1893, p. 2.

[19](#) Richard Shannon, 'The Fall of Reeves, 1893–1896', in Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), *Studies in a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, Auckland, 1963, pp. 127–52. I have tracked Reeves's influence in 'The Fabians', the first of four talks on 'Socialism in New Zealand', Radio New Zealand, 1990. The first Fabian Society in Dunedin formed only in 1897.

[20](#) *The Not So Poor* and Cooper's 'Introduction', pp. 18–22. I must record my debt to John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity*, 2nd ed., Boston, 1987, ch. 22 (especially) for his discussion about the moral status in Western culture in being oppressed, in being the victim.

[21](#) Sinclair, Reeves, pp. 207–10, 214–17.

[22](#) PD, v. 83 (1893), p. 137.

[23](#) PD, v. 96 (1896), pp. 639–42 and above, p. 130.

[24](#) In discussing the origins of arbitration, historians have failed to note

that voluntary systems became very popular in mid-Victorian Britain between skilled unions and employers; see Joyce, *Work*, pp. 70–72; for railways see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, ch. 5 and ASRS National Executive Minutes, 3 Sept. 1891, 5 June 1893 and 10 Aug. 1894. For the background see Sinclair, *Reeves*, pp. 151–3, 205–7.

[25](#) *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, p. v.

[26](#) *The Labour Movement in Australasia: A Study in Social Democracy*, London, 1907, p. 207. Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration*, ch. 1 provides the best discussion of this law’s origins.

[27](#) Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, London, 1902, p. xlv.

[28](#) James Holt, ‘Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand, 1894–1901: The Evolution of an Industrial Relations System’, *NZJH*, v. 4 (Oct. 1980), pp. 184–5.

[29](#) For a visit to Shacklock’s see J. A. McCullough, ‘Diary’, 30 Nov. 1913, McCullough MSS, Canterbury Museum Library. McCullough was the workers’ assessor from 1907 until 1923.

[30](#) See *Awards*, v. 1 (1894–1901), pp. 58–62, 62–76 (Auckland) and pp. 155–9 (Wellington). In Dunedin the Otago Daily Times and Witness Co. took the initiative in introducing this technology and the Typographers battled to maintain the position of the compositors. They succeeded.

[31](#) Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration*, p. 31.

[32](#) The proceedings were published in the *AJHR*, 1891, H–48. In 1894 Reeves ‘put in a (confidential) draft of a “Masters and Apprentices” bill—as amended by the “Trades Councils’ Conference”, 29.3.94’, to the Labour Bills Committee, but even this tantalising titbit was later struck from the minutes; Minutes of Labour Bills Committee, 31 Aug. 1894, Le. 1/1894/4, Legislative Dept, National Archives.

[33](#) *AJHR*, 1894, 1–13, and for Scoullar pp. 14–16.

[34](#) Minutes of the Labour Bills Committee, 16 Oct. 1894, Le. 1/ 1894/4.

[35](#) *Proceedings*, 1895, pp. 10, 12–13.

[36](#) Minutes, 19 Aug. 1896, Le. 1/1896/4.

[37](#) *Ibid.*, 25 Aug. 1896. The voting was 3–3, with Pinkerton and Millar voting with Morrison, while Earnshaw joined two opposition MHRs in opposing. It carried on Pinkerton’s casting vote.

[38](#) *Ibid.* The formula divided the apprenticeship into four periods and

graduated the wage from 10 per cent of the 'standard rate' for journeymen or 'skilled operatives' in the first period to 50 per cent in the last.

[39](#) *PD*, v. 95 (1896), p. 553.

[40](#) *Ibid.*, p. 575.

[41](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 584–5 for Morrison. See above, pp. 77–81 for union efforts to confine women and Olssen, 'The New Zealand Labour Movement and Race', forthcoming.

[42](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 558–61 and Tregear to W. P. Reeves, 7 Oct. 1896, Letters from Men of Mark, Reeves MSS, Alexander Turnbull Library.

[43](#) *Awards*, v. 1 (1894–1900), pp. 200–8 (Canterbury Bootmakers) and pp. 312–13 (Dunedin Furniture Trade).

[44](#) 'Government Railways Department Classification', *The Statutes of New Zealand ...*, Wellington, 1896, pp. 125–7 and above, pp. 128–31. For the union's involvement see Minutes of ASRS National Executive, 18 Oct. 1895 through 28 May 1897.

[45](#) Sidey listed the various species of casual; *RR*, 21 Oct. 1910, p. 456.

[46](#) Dunedin Prohibition League Minute Book, 12 Oct. 1896, cited in Pearson, 'The Political Labour Movement in Dunedin', p. 58.

[47](#) *ODT*, 2 Dec. 1896, p. 4.

[48](#) By 1896 Earnshaw thought prohibition central to improving labour's condition and destroying larrikinism, servility and destitution. He called on labour to dedicate itself to prohibition for the next five years; *ODT*, 30 Oct. 1896, p. 3. He had actually broken with the WPC in 1894; see Earnshaw to Slater, 26 Nov. 1894, Paul MSS, Box 8.

[49](#) Pearson, 'Political Labour Movement', pp. 49–58.

[50](#) Millar to Foreman (Sec. WPC), 28 Sept. 1896, Paul MSS, Box 8 and *ODT*, 5 Dec. 1896, p. 4.

[51](#) *ODT*, cited Mitchell, 'Millar', p. 79 and *OW*, 11 Jan. 1896, p. 6. For the result see *ODT*, 5 Dec. 1896, p. 4, and for the new boundaries, *AJHR*, 1896, H–21, p. 14.

[52](#) See various documents in Paul MSS, Box 8, including Pinkerton, Morrison and Hutchison to H. Foreman (Sec. WPC), 28 Sept. 1896. For Earnshaw's break see Earnshaw to Slater, 26 Nov. 1894, Paul MSS, Box 8.

[53](#) Earnshaw had also done best in this South Dunedin booth and this pattern is consistent with the evidence from Oamaru, where people living in the town's roughest district, where brothels and pubs could be found, gave

strong support to No License and prohibitionist politicians; Pamela Higgins, 'The Prohibition Movement in Oamaru, 1893–1905', research thesis, OU, 1978 and Heather Ward, 'Making the World More Home Like: The Women's Christian Temperance Union During World War One', research thesis, OU, 1991.

[54](#) For Warren see his obituary, *ODT*, 9 May 1936, p. 13 and for the result *Otago Witness*, 14 Dec. 1899, p. 21.

[55](#) *Otago Witness*, 21 Sept. 1899, p. 40 and Paul, 'Trade Unionism in Otago', p. 121. It is interesting that the demands of the Knights, which appeared on their membership form, had been largely met; see amended 'Proposition for Membership' and James McIndoe (Master Workman) to Seddon, 19 Jan. 1898, Paul MSS, Box 8.

[56](#) The *Sketcher* first appeared in 1898, apparently as a monthly, although a smaller weekly number was published for a time. In 1899 Rayner went to London and Paris to study but returned for the 1902 elections. He remained in Dunedin until 1907 and shifted to Christchurch just in time to help train David Low (who had been born in St Clair and still visited his fierce grandmother there). The Hocken Library holds a broken set of the *Sketcher*. See too David Low, *Low's Autobiography*, London, 1956, pp. 35–36.

[57](#) *ODT*, 13 Dec. 1901, p. 3 and 14 Dec. 1901, p. 1. According to Slater's essay on the WPC, written for Paul in 1912, the T&LC and the WPC fell out over candidate selection for the by-election but he did not explain the issues because Paul knew more; Paul MSS, Box 8.

[58](#) These details are taken from his obituary, *Evening Star*, 13 Jan. 1909, Sidey MSS 605/2, Hocken Library.

[59](#) *ODT*, 10 Dec. 1901, p. 3 and 11 Dec. 1901, p. 4.

[60](#) For the quotation see 'A Parable', *The Hustler*, [1902], and for his speeches *ODT*, 10 Dec. 1901, p. 3 and 17 Dec. 1901, p. 5.

[61](#) For the campaign see *ODT*, Dec. 1901, *passim*. For an excellent analysis of the political salience of home-centred values see Judith Brett, *Robert Menzies' Forgotten People*, Sydney, 1992, pp. 51–58.

[62](#) *Ibid.*, 12 Dec. 1901, p. 7.

[63](#) *Ibid.*, 13 Dec. 1901, p. 3.

[64](#) *Ibid.*, 20 Dec. 1901, p. 5 for the polling booth returns.

[65](#) *Otago Witness*, 26 Nov. 1902, p. 44; *ODT*, 26 Nov. 1902, p. 3; and 7

Dec. 1905, p. 3.

[66](#) Based on 'The Minute Book of T. K. Sidey's South Dunedin Ladies' Committee, 1902–11', Sidey MSS, 605/30.

[67](#) This paragraph is based on Sidey's inwards correspondence for the period 1901–8. For the 'left-wing' Liberals see R. K. Newman, 'Liberal Policy and the left wing, 1908–1911: A Study of Middle-class Radicalism in New Zealand', MA thesis, Auckland, 1965.

[68](#) By 1908 the Representation Commission had changed the electorate's name from Caversham to Dunedin South and moved the streets above The Glen into Dunedin Central.

[69](#) *Otago Liberal*, 4 March 1905, p. 11. Similar claims were made from time to time, usually about Walker Street, in 'the devil's half acre'; see *ODT*, 6 April 1907, p. 5 and W. A. V. Clark, 'The Slums of Dunedin, 1900–1910', *New Zealand Geographers' Conference, Proceedings*, v. 3 (Aug. 1961), pp. 85–92.

[70](#) *Ibid.*, 4 Feb. 1905, p. 7.

[71](#) *ODT*, 29 Oct. 1908, Sidey MSS, 605/3 and the Minute Book of the Dunedin Branch of the IPL, 1905–8, Hocken Library.

[72](#) *Evening Star*, 28 and 29 Oct. 1908, Sidey MSS, 605/3.

[73](#) *ODT*, 13 Nov. 1908, Sidey MSS, 605/3.

[74](#) *AJHR*, 1909, H–30C, p. 22.

[75](#) *ODT* and *Evening Star*, 6 March 1909, Sidey MSS, 605/2.

[76](#) J. A. McCullough, 'Diary', 17 May 1911.

[77](#) ASC&J Minutes, 16 July, 13 and 27 Aug., 22 Oct. and 5 Nov. 1909. According to the Department of Labour *Journal*, v. 17 (April 1909), forty carpenters were 'reported to be idle ...'.

[78](#) *Evening Star*, 26 Jan. 1909, pp. 4, 8.

[79](#) Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, p. 15.

[80](#) *ODT*, 28 Sept. 1909, Sidey MSS, 605/2 and *Evening Star*, 6 March 1917, *ibid.*, 605/7.

[81](#) 'Earlier Days of Odd Fellowship in Dunedin.'

[82](#) *Evening Star*, 18 Nov. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/2. His support for free trade in wheat and flour antagonised one constituent, Fred Hall of Wilkie & Co., Millers, who lived on the Main South Road; Hall to Sidey, 1 Aug. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/16.

[83](#) *Commonweal*, v. 2 (Aug. 1908), p. 4 and (April 1908), p. 3. For the

union's formation see Stephen Kennedy, "'Really Concerned Men': A History of the Dunedin Labourer and His Union, 1905–11", research thesis, OU, 1978, pp. 7–8.

[84](#) *Evening Star*, 17 Oct. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/2.

[85](#) *Maoriland Worker*, 22 Sept. 1911, p. 5 and 16 June 1911, p. 12.

[86](#) James Jackson to Sidey, 28 Sept. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/16.

[87](#) These men were office holders in 1908 and continued to occupy the key positions in the Socialist Party and, after 1913, the Social Democratic Party; see *Commonweal*, v. 3 (Sept. 1908), p. 2; McCarthy's letterbooks, Hocken Library; Richard V. Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone and the Dunedin Labour Movement, with Particular Reference to the Years 1912–1920', research thesis, OU, 1981, pp. 1–3 and 75; and Justin T. Strang, 'Against the Tide: Arthur McCarthy and the Formation of the Labour Party', research thesis, OU, [1987], pp. 1–3.

[88](#) See *Voice of Labour*, 22 Sept. 1911; ASC&J Minutes, 12 July 1909 (for Warren) and the letter from John Loydall, branch secretary, to ASC&J *Monthly Report*, Sept. 1912, pp. 6–7; and for the local form of the new party *Weekly Herald*, 31 July 1909, p. 1 and 18 Feb. 1911, p. 7. For union disaffection with the Liberals and the Arbitration Court, see my *Red Feds*, pp. 53–58, 64–65.

[89](#) R. Slater and A. R. Jackson for the NZLP, *To the Electors of Dunedin Central*, [Dunedin, 1911], Hocken Library, and ASC&J Minutes, 10 March and 22 Sept. 1911.

[90](#) *AJHR*, 1912, H–12A, p. 24 for the official returns and *Otago Witness*, 16 July 1929, p. 35 for Arnold's obituary.

[91](#) Stephen Kennedy, "'Really Concerned Men'", pp. 33, 49 and Appendices III and IV; for candidate selection see ASC&J Minutes, 8 and 22 Sept. 1911.

[92](#) The minute books of this committee for 1905–11 are in the Sidey MSS, 605/30.

[93](#) The party's history locally has been pieced together from the *Weekly Herald*, the paper of the Wellington and Canterbury Trades Councils; see 18 Feb. 1911, p. 7; 18 March 1911, p. 3; 24 May 1911, p. 3; 28 June 1911, p. 3; and 12 July 1911, p. 1. For its platform see the LRC's *Manifesto to the People*, [Dunedin, 1911] and *Notice of Meeting*, [Dunedin, 1911], Mark Silverstone MSS, Hocken Library.

[94](#) He turned to the hard-drinking secretary of the Seamen for help; William Belcher to MacManus, 18 Oct. 1911, Belcher Letterbook, p. 447, Federated Seamen's Union MSS, Alexander Turnbull Library. I am indebted to MacManus's daughter, Mrs Preston, for a series of conversations about her father and a Letterbook, kept when he was secretary for the Good Intent Lodge, Druids, in 1914–15, which contains many press clippings.

[95](#) Kennedy, "‘Really Concerned Men’", pp. 14, 32; 'Cost of Living in New Zealand: Report and Evidence', *AJHR*, 1912, H–18, p. 5; *Weekly Herald*, 4 March 1911, p. 4 and 10 May 1911, p. 3; and for a brief sketch, McCullough, 'Diary', 5 Feb. 1908. See too John Martin's essay on Boreham in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, pp. 50–51.

[96](#) E.g. Ted Howard in *Maoriland Worker*, 29 March 1912, p. 7.

[97](#) For the city and the Dominion see Olssen, 'The Origins of the Labour Party: A Reconsideration', *NZJH*, v. 21 (April 1987), pp. 82–90.

[98](#) ASC&J Minutes, 8 Aug. 1913 and the ballot paper in Paul MSS, Box 26. See too the Tailoresses' membership certificate, Hocken Library, and for the branch Paul to David McLaren, 30 Jan. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 18. There were a confusing number of labour parties in this period; for this one see *Red Feds*, ch. 4.

[99](#) *Evening Star*, 26 April 1913, p. 2 for a report of their speeches and 1 May 1913, p. 7 for the results. This is similar to the situation reported for Christchurch; see James Watson, 'An Independent Working Class?', in John E. Martin and Kerry Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement*, Palmerston North, 1991, pp. 184–96.

[100](#) McCullough, 'Diary', 1 Feb. 1908 for the description and for the campaign *Evening Star*, 21 April 1913, p. 5 and 1 May 1913, p. 7.

[101](#) Paul to David McLaren, 30 Jan. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 18 and *Evening Star*, 10 Dec. 1914, Sidey MSS, 605/1 p. 56. The Labour-Socialist coalition was even more complicated. Following the defeat of the Waihi strike, the Federation of Labour convened two 'Unity' Conferences which established a United Federation of Labour and a Social Democratic Party. Most Otago unions and the T&LC refused to join either. The T&LC reorganised itself into an Otago Labour Council with political and industrial functions. After the UFL changed its constitution in 1914 the OLC affiliated and entered the coalition to contest the 1914 elections. The OLC agreed that

the SDP would become the political arm of the OLC after polling day but later reneged; see 'Report...Joint Conference of the Otago Labour Council and Social Democratic Party, 12 August 1914' and various other documents in Paul MSS, Box 60. See also Breen (Sec. OLC) to all affiliates, 14 Sept. 1914 and to Paul, 22 Oct. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 5.

[102](#) ODT, 15 Oct. 1914, Sidey MSS, 605/1.

[103](#) *Evening Star*, 11 Dec. 1914, *ibid.*, pp. 5, 7–8; 'Otago Labour Council, Proposed Rules, Adopted ... 19 March 1914', Silverstone MSS, Hocken Library; Paul to David McLaren, 30 Jan. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 18; and 'Dunedin', *Australasian Typographers' Journal*, v. 14 (June 1914), p. 22.

[104](#) Munro defended his loyalty and gave an accurate account of the issues in *Dunedin Central Election*, Dunedin, 1915.

[105](#) The names of those members of the ASC&J were recorded in the 'Membership Book'. For the workshops see *RR*, 2 June 1916, p. 231 and 9 March 1917, p. 133.

[106](#) *RR*, 28 July 1916, p. 315.

[107](#) 'New Zealand', *Round Table*, v. 6 (March 1916), p. 385 for the rumours. For the meeting see *RR*, 28 July 1916, p. 341 and *ODT*, 22 May 1915, Sidey MSS, 605/1. For the Labour Council's position see *ODT*, 30 Oct. 1915, p. 4 and Paul to Hiram Hunter (Sec. United Federation of Labour), 7 Dec. 1915, Paul MSS, Box 5. Paul was now a member of the UFL Executive.

[108](#) *RR*, 11 Feb. 1916, pp. 57–58. This was the position of the Social Democratic Party, locally and nationally, except that it favoured strike action 'to resist it to the utmost'; Arthur McCarthy (Sec. Dunedin Branch) to National Secretary, 12 Nov. 1915, McCarthy MSS, Hocken Library. Although the branch had few members the Labourers' Union affiliated; Peter Fraser to McCarthy, 21 March 1914, McCarthy MSS.

[109](#) *ODT*, 10 March 1916, Sidey MSS, 605/7.

[110](#) Paul's position was quite complex but he voted against the third reading of the Military Service Act; *PD*, v. 175 (5 June 1916), p. 879.

[111](#) See McCarthy to Peter Fraser, 28 Feb. 1916, McCarthy MSS; R. Breen (Sec. OLC) to Paul, 26 June 1916, Paul MSS, Box 482; ASC&J Minutes, 21 Jan., 9 and 23 June, 20 Sept. and 27 Oct. 1916; and E. J. Howard, the northern socialist, *Maoriland Worker*, 29 March 1912, p. 7. For

the attitude of local SDP members, see Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', ch. 3.

[112](#) Silverstone's notes on the inaugural meeting of the LRC, 28 Sept. 1916, Silverstone MSS; 'Minutes...', 28 Sept. 1916, Paul MSS, Box 480; *ODT*, 11 Nov. 1916, p. 5 for Kellett; and Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', pp. 42–43.

[113](#) Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', pp. 43–47.

[114](#) At Hillside three amendments were beaten before a motion congratulating Paul for his December statement passed; *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 88 and ASC&J Minutes, 22 Dec. 1916.

[115](#) Silverstone to F. Jones, 10 Jan. 1917 and 'Report of the Joint Committee on the Political Organisation of Labour, April 19, 1917', Silverstone MSS; [OLC] 'Circular to all Affiliated Unions, 2 May 1917', Paul MSS, Box 18; *ODT*, 6 June 1917, p. 7; Evans to National Secretary NZLP, 31 July 1917, Paul MSS, Box 60; and Kellett, *To the Hectors of Dunedin North*, Dunedin, 1919.

[116](#) *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 88.

[117](#) *RR*, 9 March 1917, p. 133, 26 July 1918, p. 343; for ASC&J see Minutes, 22 Dec. 1916, 30 March and 27 April 1917; for Sidey's remarks *ODT*, 10 May 1917, Sidey MSS, 605/7. For the numbers of labourers see 'First Annual Report of Central Labour Office ... for the Year ending June 8th 1918', Silverstone MSS, and for Boreham's views, *Maoriland Worker*, 31 July 1918, p. 5.

[118](#) *Evening Star*, 16 May 1917 and *ODT*, 16 May 1917 Sidey MSS, 605/7 and *ODT*, 5 May 1917, p. 8 for Boreham's comments when leading a deputation from the Cordial Workers' Union. Some 18,000 people in Dunedin South and Central signed the petition; *ibid.*, 22 June 1917.

[119](#) *RR*, 4 May 1917, p. 183 and 1 June 1917, p. 231. Shaun F. Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism: J. T. Paul and the New Zealand Labour Movement 1916–1922', research thesis, OU, 1993, pp. ii, 32–35.

[120](#) Support for prohibition was consistently strongest in St Clair, followed by St Peter's or the Wesleyan Schoolroom on Cargill Road, Parkside, and Caversham township (in 1919 St Peter's gave over 63 per cent and the Marion Street booth a whopping 70 per cent to prohibition). The Kensington–South Dunedin booths usually gave between 50 and 55 per cent to continuance.

[121](#) McCarthy to John Glover, 15 Feb, 1916, McCarthy MSS, Hocken

Library.

[122](#) This paragraph has been shaped by Marilyn Lake, 'Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation ...', *Gender and History*, v. 4 (Autumn 1992), pp. 305–22 and 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context', *Historical Studies*, v. 22 (April 1986), pp. 116–31.

[123](#) ASC&J Minutes, 19 March; for the LRC see *ODT*, 30 March 1915, p. 4; and for the Association see *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 88.

[124](#) *RR*, 22 Sept. 1916, p. 404.

[125](#) *RR*, 20 Sept. 1918, pp. 435–6; 10 Jan. 1919, p. 625; 25 July 1919, pp. 301–2. See too Margaret Tennant, 'Natural Directions: The New Zealand Movement for Sexual Differentiation in Education During the Early Twentieth Century', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, v. 12 (Oct. 1977), pp. 142–53.

[126](#) *RR*, 30 June and 25 Aug. 1916, pp. 277 and 363 respectively; for Paul see *ODT*, 6 Jan. 1917, p. 12.

[127](#) *RR*, 7 April 1916, p. 169 and ASC&J Minutes, 26 May, 9 June and 20 Sept. 1916; for the Central Labour Office; Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', ch. 5; Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', pp.13–18; *RR*, 28 June 1918, p. 317 and 4 April 1919, p. 135 (WEA); and for the affiliation of ASRS and Hillside, 'Report of Transport Workers' Conference', 26–28 June 1916, Jim Roberts MSS, VUW; *RR*, 5 April 1918, p. 159, 12 Dec. 1919, p. 571, and 22 Sept. 1922, pp. 476–7. On the importance of WEA see Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', pp. 35–36 and B. S. Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence: The Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party, 1900–1919*, Auckland, 1980, p. 90. For Guild Socialism see Strang, 'Against the Tide', pp. 36–38; Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', pp. 13–15; and two essays by Jack Vowles, 'Ideology and the Formation of the New Zealand Labour Party', *NZJH*, v. 16 (April 1982), 52–54 and 'From Syndicalism to Guild Socialism: Some Neglected Aspects of the Ideology of the Labour Movement, 1914–1923', in Martin & Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement*, pp. 283–303.

[128](#) *RR*, 9 March 1917, pp. 111–15; 27 July 1917, p. 332; 24 Aug. 1917, p. 372.

[129](#) *RR*, 15 Nov. 1918, pp. 530, 535, 570 and 7 March 1919, p. 62.

[130](#) *RR*, 14 Dec. 1917, p. 569.

[131](#) Max Satchell, 'Pulpit Politics: the Protestant Political Association in Dunedin, 1917 to 1922', research thesis, OU, 1983, pp. 70–73.

[132](#) Sinclair, 'The Catholics of Caversham', analyses the occupations of church members. See also Richard P. Davis, 'The New Zealand Labour Party's "Irish Campaign", 1916–1922', *Political Science*, v. 19 (Oct. 1967), pp. 13–23 and P. S. O'Connor, 'Sectarian Conflict in New Zealand, 1911–1920', *Political Science*, v. 19 (1967), pp. 3–16.

[133](#) 'OLRC Parliamentary Selection Ballot 8 Oct. 1919', Paul MSS, Box 486 and T. Leyland to Sidey, 6 Oct. 1919, Sidey MSS, 205/22–3. For the new branches see *Maoriland Worker*, 26 March 1919, p. 5, 4 June 1919, p. 5, and 11 June 1919, p. 5. Caversham's executive consisted of two labourers, one carter, a clicker (Jones), a tram conductor and a tinsmith.

[134](#) A. M. Mercer to Sidey, 16 Oct. 1919, *ibid.*, 605/22–23. Paul apologised to the Liberal leader, Sir Joseph Ward, when Sidey changed his mind; Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', p. 45.

[135](#) A. Kane to Sidey, 17 Oct. 1919, *ibid.*, 205/22–23. The Paul MSS, Box 484, contains his replies to various organisations. See too Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', ch. 5.

[136](#) Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', ch. 5.

[137](#) McCarthy to John Glover, 13 April 1917, McCarthy MSS.

[138](#) From a letter pasted into the MacManus Letterbook, dated 20 Nov. [early 1920s]. Labour's commitment to land nationalisation easily met the needs of leaseholders.

[139](#) The argument here involves a rejection of my earlier position, expressed in 'The Origins of the Labour Party ...', *NZJH*, v. 21 (April 1987), pp. 79–96, which accorded primacy to social processes and especially the transformation of work. These may have been important nationally, but not decisive, and were insignificant locally.

[140](#) *RR*, 10 Feb. 1922, p. 96 and 5 May 1922, p. 230.

[141](#) Gilchrist to Paul, 27 March 1922; Jones to Paul, 18 May 1922; L. Evans (Sec. OLC) to Paul, 19 May 1922; Paul to Gilchrist, 19 May, 1922, Paul MSS; and E. C. Hunt (Sec. ASC&J) to J. Gilchrist, 9 March 1922, ASC&J Letterbook.

[142](#) *RR*, 10 Feb. 1922, p. 57 and 28 July 1922, pp. 345–7. See also *AJHR*, 1923, H–33A, pp. 25–26 (for the electoral vote) and 33B, p. 17 (for the licensing poll).

[143](#) There is surprisingly little on the impact of the war on the meaning of gender but see Jill Roe, 'Chivalry and Social Policy in the Antipodes', *Historical Studies*, v. 22 (April 1987), pp. 395–410. For the views of socialist women, see Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', in Bunkle & Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, pp. 177–8.

## CHAPTER 9

# *Social Structure*

It has long been customary among historians and social scientists to assume that economic change determines social structure and that both profoundly shape politics. This broadly materialist assumption has come under increasing assault in the last generation. Although some have abandoned the old position entirely, usually in favour of language or discourse as determinative, in this book I have picked out a middle path. If the modes of production shaped values and beliefs, society and politics, then it needs to be remembered that the influence was reciprocal and dialectical, and that politics, beliefs and desires shaped society and the modes of production. Technological change occurred, but the cultural and political context shaped what people decided to use and how they used it. Human desire also shaped that context. Society, in short, is better thought of not as a reflection of the mode of production, for the two interpenetrate continuously but as a dance or play in which the performers learn their steps and lines, perform them almost instinctively, but never lose their ability to innovate or stumble.

Handicraft production and its norms shaped not only the labour process in workshops and factories but social relations and culture in Caversham. The dignity of labour, the labour theory of value, the idea that a working man's labour and skill constituted a form of property, and even the growing tendency to substitute the individual working man for the family as the basic unit of production, all converged to render the idea of crafts normative, fixed in meaning and part of the natural social landscape. Each idea fed and supported the others, legitimising apprentice-based crafts, the standard rate, seniority, the skilled worker's control of the labour process and the notion of a 'fair wage' and a 'fair price'. The skilled workers' dislike of price or wage cutting and their commitment to democratic values helped control all economic activities within the community, armed them with potent symbolic enemies (such as monopolists), and provided a measure of who belonged to the community. Their dislike of monopoly and

their distrust of ‘the competitive system’ also provided them with a diffuse political programme. As that programme cohered it became an instrument for shaping change to reinforce rather than threaten the position of skilled men and handicraft values. The handicrafts, in short, shaped the meanings of class and socialism.

## I

In attempting to assess the meaning of social class in Caversham we must start with the crafts and trades. In mid-Victorian Britain—a complex and diverse society—working men came to accept the law of supply and demand but still believed themselves to have property in their skill and their labour. This belief not only gave tradesmen a vested interest in their trades but persuaded them that labour was the fundamental source of value in society.<sup>1</sup> In Caversham and the colony nobody doubted the importance of physical work or skill; the ‘New Chum’s’ inability to adapt often proved the point. The idea of a trade also embodied the idea of a community of interests, ‘an arena of reciprocal rights and duties, which defined a kind of partnership’.<sup>2</sup> Labour and Capital were interdependent. Rutherford the grocer always gave his regular customers a bottle of whisky or a tin of tea at Christmas and newspaper-delivery boys received a ‘Christmas box’. Merchants also extended credit to regular customers and employers, like C. W. Shiel, accepted responsibility for looking after any regular workers who fell sick or suffered an accident.<sup>3</sup> Notions of a rightful price, a ‘fair wage’, ‘just’ employers, ‘a fair day’s work’ and a ‘fair price’ had their origin here and constituted a measure of civilised behaviour. Again, in Caversham and for the colonists generally, civilisation had become an unchallengeable good, for all contributed to this great moral task. People rejected the law of the jungle. Strong should not be free to devour weak. The market had to be moralised, capital civilised and the working classes uplifted from drunken debauchery and immorality. The project of colonisation was also the project of civilisation. The unions used this moral discourse as much to control their own members as to bargain with masters or appeal to ‘the public’. It is worth noting, indeed, that no union ever struck in Caversham or The Flat (apart from the railwaymen in 1924 when Hillside opposed and the

tradesmen then seceded).

The idea of the trade or craft signified not only unity and inclusion but exclusion. Tradesmen, by controlling the labour process, determined who could use certain machines and tools and who could do what work. The translation of craft skills into factories required effective ‘mechanisms of social exclusion ... [and a] high degree of social control over the operation and utilization of machinery’.<sup>4</sup> The early unions used the discourse of civilisation to persuade ‘the public’ that ‘aliens’ should not be admitted to the colony, let alone the crafts. The law might effect exclusion from the colony but only custom, vigorously policed, could prevent the industrious ‘alien’ from setting up as a furniture maker or blacksmith. Tradesmen also excluded women from male crafts. In 1903 the Caversham Literary and Debating Society and the Loyal Caversham Lodge of Manchester United debated: ‘Ought women to compete with men in the labor market?’ Members and ‘their lady friends’ attended in large numbers. ‘After an animated discussion the Caversham Lodge, which took the negative position, were voted the winners.’<sup>5</sup>

The family also embodied the idea of reciprocal rights and duties among those with different functions and responsibilities. Family and trade also constituted metaphorical resources which defined each other. Skilled men often joined the union and gave up playing games such as rugby when they married; women almost always gave up paid work.<sup>6</sup> The drive for women’s suffrage, strongly supported by Dunedin’s working women, embodied not only an insistence on the importance of domesticity but a claim that women should enjoy political equality with men. Although some wives may have continued to assist in handicraft manufacturing done at home, the boundary between domesticity and paid work marked the difference between ladies and women. Nobody wanted women doing heavy and dirty physical work outside the home. The tension between the meanings of women and ladies, or men and gentlemen, reminded people of the dream of a new social order. If the reader has trouble believing that young working women dreamed of leaving paid work to manage their own homes and bring up children—an aspiration often described as ‘middle class’—that difficulty reveals more of our world than it does of theirs. Had Bellamy’s fictional hero, travelling back from the year 2000, told them that women of the future thought any

such thing they would have been incredulous.

Difference worried them little because they considered reciprocity and interdependence axiomatic. Ladies and Gentlemen went together like a horse and carriage, skilled and unskilled, or Capital and Labour. Their interdependence constituted part of the natural order. Many adults lived in households rather than conjugal families, but here too people created a world of reciprocal rights and duties, of interdependence. Reciprocity and interdependence modified the possible meanings of class but found expression in mutualism, voluntarism, and the reciprocal rights and duties of kinship and neighbourliness.<sup>7</sup> Before 1916 the revolutionary socialist's ideology of class sat uncomfortably with the community's belief in trade and family. People usually spoke of class in the plural (although without denying Labour's wider unity). By 1922 most unionists accepted the superiority of industrial over craft unionism and spoke of class in the singular. It may well be that this shift occurred more easily because the war undermined women's claim to equality and reinstated chivalry as the principal relationship between men and women.<sup>8</sup>

If family and class defined each other in complex ways, community and class melded more easily. Although it is inaccurate to describe Caversham as a 'working-class community', manual workers who sold their labour dominated. All but a handful of professionals worked with their hands and the community, St Clair and Forbury Road partially excepted, thought of itself as a community of workers. Just as the language of the crafts and trades 'conveyed important distinctions of honour and worth far beyond the ranks of craft workers alone', so the men of these trades incorporated others within their community of crafts.<sup>9</sup> Not only did skilled men try to incorporate the unskilled into their unions but they also articulated a new ideology of 'labourism' centred on a living wage for all male workers. By the same token the skilled workers also incorporated the masters of their trades within their community when they lived among them (as they usually did). Expressions such as 'the people' or even 'the workers' included almost all men although they did not preclude different political or religious loyalties. It might be tempting to talk of the ambiguities or contradictions in such a perspective but these are less a function of their experience than of our teleologies. The rise of the Labour Party, especially between 1916 and

1922, altered the way people thought about class. While the new meanings measured a lapse from the idea of an ideal community—‘God’s Own Country’, ‘Our Free Land’—the word still retained its positive (and older) sense of pride and self-respect, a meaning derived from the world of crafts. In Caversham men still spoke of artisans and journeymen in the 1920s, even as they joined the working-class crusade for a socialist society.

People gave class these meanings (although in constructing them they drew upon the intellectual resources of the English-speaking world and the process involved debate and contention). Yet the physical separateness of Caversham and The Flat allowed the masters, journeymen and their unskilled helpers sufficient freedom to proceed autonomously. In one important sense, of course, they wished to recreate the sort of industrious community that many of them thought had once existed in Britain. This involved a complex juggling act, for they wished to accept the new technologies—indeed many skilled men had a passionate interest in them—while containing their cultural and social consequences. In terms of class theory, whether Marxist or Weberian, technology determines the division of labour and the division of labour generates class. This is precisely what most masters and journeymen rejected. By the 1920s some masters, whether inspired by Fletcher or Spidy, wanted to destroy some of the restrictive practices through which their employees achieved this containment. Nobody in Caversham attacked apprentice-based crafts, the gendered division of labour, the exclusion of ‘aliens’, or arbitration.

The new socialist definition of class which became dominant on The Flat during the war marginalised masters (increasingly described as employers or self-employed). The older and inclusive term, Labour, remained in use as a short-hand summation of moral purpose but no longer a sociological category. The unions now excluded masters and socialists increasingly portrayed handicraft workshops as anachronistic, potential sweatshops doomed to extinction. In the process the contribution of masters to the production process—not to mention invention and design—was suppressed. They may have been excluded from the working class by this process of redefinition, but their commitment to Labour and the ideology of ‘labourism’ deeply shaped the character of the Liberals and the Reform Party in Caversham and Dunedin.



*Mrs Charlotte Grimmett, 1835–1921, joined the Salvation Army in the 1890s (with her husband). Her belief in the redemptive power of women found expression in the Army, which allowed women to hold positions of authority. She also believed passionately in prohibition. On Fitzroy Street, where she lived, the Waterloo Hotel made drunkenness and its impact on family life very evident. Courtesy Bert Grimmett, copied by Reg Graham.*

The same shift in meaning made the position of women more problematic. Married women remained outside the new definition of class, for class emerged from selling one's labour for a wage, from work (as it was increasingly defined). Nobody objected to married women working as members of a productive family unit, so long as they worked for the family. Nor did people object to unmarried women selling their labour for a wage, but they expected them to give their wage to their parents and to leave the labour market on marriage. The ideology of the male breadwinner legitimised this exclusion and suppressed the importance of domestic labour to the subsistence of working men. 'Two labours, conducted at two separate sites, are indispensable ... but in the wage form only *one* of them is

rewarded with payment, only one entitles its “earner” ... to spend this payment as his own.’<sup>10</sup> The new meaning of work shaped the new language of class; it declared itself universal, a structural feature of capitalism. The word Labour took on this meaning, although it still acknowledged birth as a form of productive activity. The new meaning of class did not. Although women constituted over half of Caversham’s population by the end of the war, they remained outside. The local leaders of the workers may have sensed this intuitively, for they clung to Labour as the party’s name despite its ideological shortcomings. From time to time they also called for public creches and a motherhood endowment. Yet church membership remained much more important to women than union membership and they were probably less likely than their men to vote for Labour. Before the war some women thought that they constituted a sociological category as important as class. The more advanced belonged to the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and flaunted ‘blue ribbons’. The more formidable, like Mrs Charlotte Grimmett of the Salvation Army, would stand outside the pubs collecting money from the men as they left. ‘She just stood and looked at them.’ So long as children found amusement in watching the drunken behaviour of some men, staggering home or sleeping stupefied in empty sections, they had work to do.<sup>11</sup> By rendering a chivalric code of gender relations normal the war legitimised the redefinition of work and class to exclude women. It is not surprising that in 1920 the Tailoresses voted to give up their separate identity and merge with the male-dominated Clothing Workers’ Union.

Partly in response to these tensions people increasingly used the name of the area—either Caversham or The Flat—to define metaphorically the various meanings of class. Each of those meanings affirmed widely shared values about manual work and those who did it. The handicraft trades, increasingly ignored by socialists as anachronisms, still shaped what the community meant by class. By the end of the war the language of class implied rigidity and stasis, a closed system created by capitalism rather than a closed system left behind in Britain. Yet social reality stood in tension with this understanding. In handicraft trades, whether unionised or not, class position remained in some measure a function of age, choice and luck. The successful translation of handicraft norms into the factories certainly meant that pay increased with age and experience, as did the chance of

becoming a leading hand, foreman or manager. The phrase ‘working classes’ conveyed what people believed they saw; the singular ‘class’ denoted what they feared and wished to escape. In the 1880s the fears of masters and journeymen dominated; from 1889–90 to about 1909–13 the fears of journeymen dominated; thereafter, in New Zealand, the fears and hopes of the unskilled became more important. Over this period Caversham’s journeymen feared the extinction of their crafts and sought unity, but only for specific purposes. Although the source of their fear changed over time, it always created the possibility of transcending craft and creating a wider unity capable of saving the nation. Even after the last shift in the meaning of class, which took place in 1916–22, the word still evoked memories of the Old World and fears for the New.

## II

In tracing the history of those fears we must start with the contrasts between the Old and the New World, for those contrasts shaped the perceptions of the immigrants who settled Caversham and transformed it from a ‘state of nature’ into an industrial centre. Although the New Zealand born rapidly grew in numbers, the older and successful immigrants remained powerful in the community. They held in their minds an inventory of the difference between Old and New. Besides, from 1896 until the outbreak of war, immigrants continued to arrive and supplement the extensive newspaper accounts of ‘Home’ news with their own firsthand reports on developments. Captain William Blackie’s cottage, built in 1850, still stood as a reminder to all of how close they were to a ‘state of nature’ in which all had been equal. That cottage reminded men and women that the New World had created the possibility of leaving behind the social hierarchies of England, not to mention the caste system of Ireland. Images and memories of the Old World shaped what they wanted from the New. In retrospect we might think their aspirations too modest. That would be condescending. They left behind the established church, the most insidious forms of privilege, and the aristocracy. In the 1870s and 1880s the word ‘class’ warned of an Old World social order that people wished to leave behind.



*William Williams's photograph of Captain Blackie's cottage, c. 1903. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

In much of Britain class entailed deference, but the migrants left deference behind.<sup>12</sup> Successful masters did not want deference, only respect for themselves and what they had achieved. Even the well-to-do merchants and landowners, Barron and Sidey, took pride in their modest backgrounds as miner and carpenter respectively. Barron's three children served apprenticeships. In 1910, at the age of eighty-seven, John Sidey would climb the scaffolding to supervise the construction of a new section of his mansion. His skill commanded more deference than his wealth.<sup>13</sup> The discretionary authority of skill won esteem for skilled workers. C. W. Shiel respected 'Mr Fox', the brickmaker, and the Shiel children called him 'Mr Fox', just as Fletcher respected 'Old Tom Scofield'. Independence also meant a willingness to speak frankly and let the chips fall, as Lister and Mack did. People admired that sort of independence regardless of the message. In 1913, for instance, the local Carpenters, who strongly distrusted the Red Feds, heard Robert Semple with 'rapt attention'.<sup>14</sup> The

community respected skill, independence and the capacity for hard physical work. Economic growth made it easier for men to achieve independence, especially during the 1870s and the long spell of prosperity between 1896 and 1921–22. Work was readily available and most couples could afford a home and section of their own. Affluence helped to sever wealth, status and power.

If the community doggedly refused to accord esteem to those who measured success by the ability to make money, it threw off its inhibitions when it came to those who served the community or excelled in unpaid activities. MHRs and local-body politicians, like J. B. Shacklock and Hancock, enjoyed considerable esteem. So did clergymen (so long as they were not considered fanatical), like Dutton and King. Sport, and especially rugby, also emerged as an important source of status and esteem in the early twentieth century. By British (or more specifically English) standards only gentlemen played games for no financial reward. Like so many skilled jobs, most sports also required a combination of physical strength, manual dexterity, skill and team work. Success, whether as player or coach, brought considerable status. Rugby's popularity owed something to its need for strength and skill. Vic Cavanagh, a tailor's cutter who lived in Caversham but worked for Ross and Glendinning, enjoyed great esteem as the man who merged the Caversham Club with Southern and then coached Southern to a succession of triumphs. As president of the Otago Rugby Football Union in the early 1920s he consolidated his status and then became a living legend as Otago's coach in the 1930s (when his son coached Southern and he coached Varsity). Andrew Mercer, a carpenter at Hillside (and Sidey's campaign manager in 1919), also enjoyed great status as trainer for Otago and the All Blacks in the early 1920s. They were amongst the best known and most esteemed men on The Flat, together with such Southern players as Jack Hore, the son of a journeyman butcher, and Dave Trevathan, the son of a Caversham labourer who lived in Marion Street.<sup>15</sup> Among older people lawn bowls played a similar role.

Migration also disrupted the inherited link between speech, status and class. The local 'elite' spoke a gaggle of accents and dialects. Charles Baeyertz might denounce slovenliness of speech and cajole parents to send their children to elocution classes, but he could no more change colonial

realities than halt the tides. Parents may have fretted about the new colonial accent which children increasingly spoke, but to no avail (although those who subjected their children to elocution lessons undoubtedly had some success). Accent no longer functioned as an accurate guide to social position or standing and too much success in training children to speak standard English only made them seem affected and snobbish. Similarly with dress, as Arthur Adams noted. Men (and women increasingly) practised a certain honest forthrightness and treated all in the tradition of 'hail fellow, well met'. 'Most of the folk are so self-confident here', Mabel Cartwright noted, 'and have a familiar way wh annoys me at times ....' Many years later Ruby Lyons remembered with intense feeling two lines from the great pre-war hit, 'Heart of My Heart', which captured the community's self image: 'We were rough and ready guys/ But oh how we could harmonise!'<sup>16</sup>



*David Trevathan, probably in the 1920s, photographed as he cycled through the St Clair sand-hills on his way to practice at Hancock Park. He became Southern's first-five, then Otago's and New Zealand's. His drop-kicked goals were legendary. Photo by Reg Graham, courtesy Ngaire Trevathan.*

The migrants left behind not only the class privileges and accents of aristocratic Britain but the dismal horrors of London, Manchester and the industrial revolution. Few (if any) read Frederick Engels's graphic account of industrial Manchester, with its destitution and degradation, but most adults had read Charles Dickens and knew such works as *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Bleak House*. During the 1840s and 1850s a surprising number of Caversham's citizens had lived in London. Despite the attractions of the Imperial capital London was widely seen as a cancerous growth which bred criminals and disease in equal proportions. The murderous epidemics, the overflowing cemeteries, the foetid Thames, and the depths of human ignorance and destitution were rarely forgotten once seen. Dickens created the experience for those who had not lived there and

made that city, and especially its East End, a metaphor for industrial squalor. (Dickens was a popular subject for lectures and on many a night the brothers settled down to hear readings from his novels.)



*William Williams captures Kew in 1900. At this date it was a new subdivision, like St Kilda, and those who wanted land for their own garden could find some easily. William and his wife Lydia had a large house and garden here. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

Poverty and hunger—a central part of experience in much of Britain—were virtually unknown in Caversham. Food became a material and symbolic expression of affluence and the Sunday roast a ritual in most households.<sup>17</sup> Almost everybody owned or rented enough land to run a few hens and grow vegetables (as many of the photographs show). According to Mabel Cartwright, even the poorest of South Dunedin's old people usually had a house, a garden and a few hens. Nor did rows of monotonous tenements exist. The three terrace houses, built halfway up Caversham Valley Road in 1903–4, reminded everyone of their unending presence in the new industrial cities of Britain. Here people painted their wooden homes a bizarre variety of colours and grew their own flower gardens. Whenever someone like Sidey or Taverner visited the 'Old Country', a phrase which fused affection and rejection, they gave lectures on the contrasts, usually illustrated with lantern slides.<sup>18</sup> In less formal ways, so did every new immigrant from Britain. Nobody gave a public lecture on the

labour process in a British industry but men at work undoubtedly reported on the collapse of apprenticeship and the destruction of the independent artisan, the spread of subcontracting and sweating. Sceptics could read Charles Booth's seven volumes on *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1893–96) or Robert Tressell's best-selling novel, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914).

The citizens took pride in their new community and its progress, its industries and amenities, its successful masters and its democratic ways. History had become Progress, both moral and material, rather than the dead hand of the past. Even the navy, swinging his pick to dig the new double-line railway tracks or lay a new drainage and sewerage system, knew that he contributed to progress and the future. The Lib–Lab Government may have greatly enhanced this sense of a democratic New Zealand ushering the world into a new and more enlightened century, but the immigrants and their children had been embarked upon the great task of civilising the wilderness long before Reeves articulated his powerful variant of the vision in *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* (1902). Perhaps the curious ritual of 'flogging the dead horse', which occurred on many migrant vessels, if not Unity Lodges obscure "scene", which consisted of the bones of a cow, together with some human ones of both sexes', represented a repudiation of the Old World.<sup>19</sup> As J. T. Paul said:

in Old England hoary but powerful monopoly, combined with apathy, prejudice, and ignorance, damps the ardour of the reformer. In the new country monopoly is not yet so strongly entrenched, manhood is judged by its true attributes .... It is the new lands that give hope even to the old lands.

The experience of the soldiers during the war confirmed this truth.<sup>20</sup>



*This Muir and Moodie postcard of 1913 shows the upper storey of the shops facing the Main South Road. The market gardens, Forbury Park and the ocean are in the background, the cottages and garden sheds of Rockside in the foreground. The absence of tenement housing or the drab monotony of English industrial towns is striking, and so is the progress. Otago Early Settlers' Association.*

It is hard to realise now just what an open and experimental world Caversham was. Men and women from different British communities brought with them local traditions and customs—popular sayings and proverbs, dialects, superstitions, and folk customs. On the long voyage around the world and then in Caversham the juxtaposition of different national and local folkways raised each to consciousness and critical scrutiny. Such awareness suddenly made men and women free, released them from their pasts and turned them towards the future, while the habit of messing together during the voyage laid a foundation for co-operative behaviour. The voyage quickened the belief that everyone should ‘do their bit’ and ‘pull their weight’. Nor did their new world disappoint them. The mania for postcards which erupted between 1900 and the war illustrates this point, for people feasted their eyes upon what had been accomplished. It is perhaps of some significance that so many of Caversham’s leading men had grown up as part of a religious minority (Presbyterians from Ireland or England, Methodists from Scotland), and had lived in various parts of Britain before migrating. By the standards of the nineteenth

century they were tolerant and cosmopolitan. They believed, like Bracken, that in Britain Fierce, crimson-handed Bigotry held sway ... to nurture hate, and banish love away ...'. The community wanted people who would do their share and pull their weight; it did not want those who judged men and women by their accents, their church or their parents. Nor did it want absentee landlords, idlers and 'no hopers'. Work, skill and resourcefulness became the measure of men and women. As Bracken had written: 'Before you lies the future ... 'Tis yours, to shape and mould the Coming Times'.<sup>21</sup>

Memories of the Old World shaped the immigrants' desires and their sense of human possibility. The discourse of democratic radicalism initially defined what they wished to bring with them and what they wanted to leave behind. In the 1870s 'the people'—the virtuous and productive—had to guard against the corrupt and idle. In the 1880s, however, words such as class and industry, even the word city, assumed a double meaning, referring to a British reality that nobody wanted to transplant here (even though people wanted Progress and Civilisation). Such words were, in the same breath, reminders and warnings. The controversy over 'sweating' reveals the point nicely, for even the minority report merely claimed that if vigorous steps were not taken 'these very evils will have struck deep their roots in our midst'.<sup>22</sup> The suspicion arises that the existence of subcontracting most concerned working men and women, for in Britain subcontracting often destroyed the independent artisan. Words like 'class' and 'sweating' were prescriptive more than descriptive, less a clue to life than a fulcrum for reform.

Democratic ideology shaped social structure and life in Caversham. The social dominance of masters and journeymen, not to mention their political influence from 1890 onwards, inflected democratic values with those of independent artisans and skilled workers. Other groups or classes—employers, professionals, clerks and warehousemen—negotiated social and psychological space for themselves and their families on terms imposed by artisans and skilled workers. These tradesmen did not live on the periphery of a middle or lower-middle class; rather the opposite, even in the hill suburbs, except (perhaps) for pockets of St Clair, for the citizens of The Flat colonised the hills. The lodges, as we saw, recruited members from all classes. So did the Catholics, and the Protestant churches drew on all but

the unskilled. Everybody observed Hallowe'en, Guy Fawkes and Christmas (if the adults objected the children forced adherence). Leisure activities, even when segmented by age and sex, united the community as much as anything. Rugby, the most popular game amongst men, appears to have recruited its players, officials and spectators from across the social spectrum. Within Caversham township children came and went as they pleased, mixed freely with other children, and 'pretty well played with anyone ... [they] liked'.<sup>23</sup> To stand apart from 'the self-styled working classes', as Baeyertz sniffed, one 'has to fight one's own battles and stand on one's own feet'.<sup>24</sup> The values of democratic collectivism permeated Caversham.

Everyone worked with their hands and everyone thought work valuable. John Sidey might be described on his 'Death Certificate' as a 'Gentleman' but everyone knew he had started as a carpenter, worked hard on his farm, and enjoyed some luck. Physical labour levelled status, even if when old he travelled to church in his carriage and owned a family pew.<sup>25</sup> It was the same amongst the women. Everyone worked. Ladies and gentlemen, as understood in aristocratic England, did not exist, for nobody who could afford a life of idleness ever bothered to migrate around the world (although Barron appears to have freed his daughters from Adam's curse). Nor, significantly (given the ideological debates in Europe), were men or women alienated from their labour in Marx's sense. Even in the railway workshops skilled men usually owned their own tools (and often made them at work). The community despised those who would not pull their weight, do their share, and pitch in when needed. The recurring use of the metaphor of the man who does not clean his own shoes reminds us not only that clean shoes formed part of the respectable artisan's persona but that those who did not do this for themselves did not belong. The school day invariably began with a shoe inspection.

The working man's claim to respect, independence and such rights as the eight-hour day won unanimous acceptance, for all, in a way, claimed to be working men. Most would have agreed with the old saying, 'The happiest man I have ever met is he who lives by the sweat of his brow' (the Knights even included it in their platform). If Utopia would exist when 'every capitalist was a worker and every worker a capitalist', then Caversham

came close to the dream.<sup>26</sup> The McIndoe boys might be sent to Otago Boys' High School, but their parents, like many of the better-off, gave them a lot of chores, including cleaning father's boots, as if they feared that the children would disdain hard physical work. Most children left school at fourteen to work and could not wait to do so.<sup>27</sup> Even during the war, after 'Mr Fat' had become a popular image of capitalist rapacity in such popular weeklies as *Truth*, the idea of a community of industrious workers modified and controlled the ways in which people understood the meaning of class and democracy. This definition included almost all adult women, for even those with live-in servants, like Mrs Shiel, worked with their hands in both house and garden.

Masters and factory managers shared the key values of the skilled men. They too, having immigrated from Britain and graduated from the crafts, accepted the customary way of doing things. Promotion from the floor, widely practised in the private sector as well as the workshops, ensured that men in authority accepted the customs of the craft. The same pattern existed in the paternalistic woollen industry, where unions were non-existent or weak. It has been argued that this pattern inhibited attempts to introduce de-skilling.<sup>28</sup> Masters also accepted the skilled man's view of the importance of apprenticeship, the gendered division of labour and the importance of excluding Chinese from the trades. They sent their children to the local schools and made their sons (and often their daughters) serve apprenticeships (T. K. Sidey had a tutor but sent his own son to Caversham school). They believed in tariff protection and dreamed of the day when New Zealand would be not only self-sufficient in manufactured goods but, like Britain, the world's workshop. When unemployment became conspicuous, masters also called for restrictions on immigration. Many went to great lengths to ensure that they did not have to lay off men during slack periods. Even the standard rate and the 'living wage' won acceptance. Nor did masters like the 'competitive system' any more than their men did. Most of them accepted the obverse of the 'fair wage', the 'fair price', and regarded undercutting as immoral. The speed with which most employers accepted the arbitration system owed much to the Court's willingness to outlaw the worst consequences of the 'competitive system'. There is also some evidence to suggest that masters established the Otago Employers'

Association in 1901 to police prices.<sup>29</sup> During the war, in fact, price-fixing became widely practised by government, and retail price maintenance became widespread. Only with a just price, of course, could one have a just wage. Masters and journeymen objected only when privately owned monopolies fixed prices.<sup>30</sup> Effective tariffs provided the key to protecting New Zealand from unfair foreign competition; the Labour Party's later ideology of economic insulation had its roots here.<sup>31</sup>

The ideology of labourism rested securely upon traditions inherited from Britain, but flourished and achieved dominance in Caversham because artisans dominated the locality and its various social organisations. As the New Zealand-born grew in numbers, references to the Old Country occurred less often and the metaphor became less salient. Yet the various meanings of that metaphor, which contrasted Old World with New World, were woven into the fabric of work and society as a set of rights, customs and normative values. Interviews with those who were children during this period confirm the point. They believed (and were taught) that inequality of wealth and status had no human significance here. The experience of the war reinforced and generalised the refusal to grant significance to inequality within Caversham. It is also possible that people used the Old World/New World contrast less as the rise of the British Labour Party encouraged the hope that the British working classes might soon throw off their burden of apathy, ignorance, superstition and poverty. Even 'conservative' colonials hoped for that much.

Inequalities existed, of course. Some families had tennis courts; the boys from other families acted as ballboys. Families with tennis courts often had stables and at least one live-in servant as well. The children of the well-to-do often had their own horses. Among the Presbyterians the well-to-do might own their own pew. It seems unlikely that many working men belonged to the golf or croquet clubs in St Clair. The children of the well-to-do also had wider choices. Mabel McIndoe, now widowed, had to scrimp but managed to help one of her sons through medical school. Others, like Barron, could afford to set his children up on their own account when they completed their apprenticeships (so did Anscombe and Grimmett, however, which indicates that great wealth was not needed).<sup>32</sup> Resentments could surface, usually because of inconsistencies between occupation, status,

possessions and behaviour. When asked whether class divisions existed, Robert Murray could recall one incident. The caretaker at the match factory saw him getting out of his 'little Austin 7 tourer'. The caretaker remarked: "“alright to be some people and have a motor car” and I said “yes and if I was going where you’re going [the pub] I’d b\_\_\_ well never have one””.<sup>33</sup> Most of those interviewed looked puzzled by questions about class. Any 'upper crust' referred to always lived elsewhere, usually 'out St Clair way more', which was broadly accurate.<sup>34</sup>

The poorest, most of whom lived in the meaner streets of South Dunedin, were usually women with young children whose husbands had deserted them. 'Says she can't go on any longer, & feels like giving in and going mad', Mabel Cartwright noted after visiting one such woman. 'Said she had nothing to eat all day.' She received twelve shillings a week from the Charitable Aid Board. Such women were largely invisible, unless one went looking for them. Those born in New Zealand after 1890 seem to have been defining poverty in a new way, however. They took for granted the gains which their immigrant parents had achieved. John A. Lee might have portrayed himself as a child of poverty; his mother disagreed. For all that a considerable gap existed between the poorest and the wealthiest, but neither extreme was conspicuous in Caversham. When Archibald McIndoe chose to 'survey a group of slum houses' for his medical thesis he focused on the effects of alcohol and malnutrition on the residents of the wharf area.<sup>35</sup>



*St Clair, St Kilda and South Dunedin, c. 1920. Caversham School is in the right foreground, the Benevolent to the left. Cargill Road runs from left to right and can be identified by the row of two-storeyed terraced houses. Tonga Park lies behind. Hocken Library.*

### III

The division between skilled and unskilled constituted one of the less permeable boundaries in Caversham. In 1902 some 22 per cent (290) of the men living in Caversham had unskilled jobs, the proportion rose to 24 per cent (422) in 1911, then fell to 19.7 per cent (371) in 1922. At work the skilled man had authority over all labourers, whether classified as ‘skilled labourers’ or not. In Victorian Britain trades and labour, artisan and labourer, expressed broad cultural differences. By the 1860s the men of the trades were usually literate and accepted the importance of Thrift, Industry, Sobriety and Punctuality. These values, if internalised, provided a means for coping with the world and maintaining respectability. They also measured the march of Civilisation. Although labourers were an extraordinarily diverse group in Victorian Britain, and remained diverse in the colony, they needed physical strength rather than knowledge. They were widely considered rough, lacking the discipline (if not the desire) to improve themselves, and uneducated. Many, indeed, were illiterate.<sup>36</sup> ‘Drunkenness,

dirt, and ignorance’, as Dickens said, ‘are the three Fates of the wretched’, and enough labourers became ‘wretched’ to give them all a bad image.<sup>37</sup> In Victorian Britain, Irish-Catholic navvies, recruited from an illiterate peasantry, helped to define the popular image of the labourer. The over-representation of the Irish among colonial labourers helped ensure that the image changed slowly. Their over-representation in the criminal statistics also reminded people of the link between moral degeneracy and lack of skill.<sup>38</sup>

Despite this cultural chasm—and one must remember that the skilled had a vested interest in portraying the unskilled as degenerate—changes in the wider economy tended to confine its significance in the colony to the workplace. Skill, in short, while remaining central to the organisation of the labour process, became less significant in social organisation. There were various reasons. In the trades of the first industrial revolution, notably engineering, a ‘new-style’ apprenticeship emerged in which journeymen did the teaching, no indentures were signed, and the lads had to find their own lodgings.<sup>39</sup> When the Liberals tried to replace the 1865 law governing apprenticeships, most of the Lib-Lab MHRs still talked in terms of indentures and living-in, but the reality had already changed. The Arbitration Court ensured that the changes amounted to little. Machinists multiplied, it is true, but the skilled preserved their control over the labour process and the Court insisted on apprenticeship as the only way of acquiring skill. Even in such trades as painting and bricklaying, learnt without apprenticeships in late-nineteenth-century Britain, the Arbitration Court insisted on them here (as did the men of the railway workshops).<sup>40</sup> Despite this success, new technologies constantly threatened to destabilise the distinction and men who had not served apprenticeships managed to infiltrate skilled trades. Besides, everyone knew that helpers and machinists were more skilled than navvies. Nor were the building and metal-working trades typical. Engine-drivers did not serve apprenticeships, for instance, but began as firemen. In many new industries of the second industrial revolution, such as electrical engineering and chemicals, formal training replaced apprenticeship. Progressive men, like Henry Shacklock, strongly supported technical education to supplement traditional apprenticeships in the metal trades.

These changes weakened the link between apprenticeship and skill and thus the skilled/unskilled distinction. By 1916 even the skilled men of the workshops wanted all youths admitted to apprenticeships for one year before they specialised, and recognised the importance of formal instruction for certain crafts. The Department of Labour took up the issue, worried about the declining number of apprentices in certain trades and the Arbitration Court's unwillingness to grapple with the issue. Nothing much came of the department's initiatives until the post-war depression persuaded the government to convene a conference of employers, unions and officials from the Departments of Education and Labour. The participants agreed quite quickly and the government enacted a new measure which preserved the apprentice-based crafts but created a more flexible system for regulating training. Employers happily demanded the exclusion of females from apprenticeships and defended the widespread New Zealand practice of having apprentices, once out of their time, work as improvers for a period. The new act also made employers responsible for providing accommodation.<sup>[41](#)</sup>

Outside the world of industrial occupations the word skill had meanings which also severed it from the notion of apprenticeship. In a predominantly rural society, and a society where horse and bullock still provided the major sources of locomotive power, the skilled/unskilled differential broke down because all skills involving animals and farm work were learnt on the job.<sup>[42](#)</sup> Ploughmen, shearers, drovers and axemen might be considered 'unskilled' by the census enumerators, but nobody who saw them in action at the Summer Show or the Caledonian Games believed them to be without skill. The popularity of ploughing matches, wood-chopping contests, and races to shear the most sheep belie the definition. Some 'bullockies' became legends in their own lives. A 'bullocky' in action, or the drovers moving the cattle and sheep along the Main South Road to the Burnside abattoirs twice a week in summer, was clearly a demonstration of great skill. Men and women also admired the skill involved in handling horses. Even the quiet nags which hauled the delivery carts could be startled into panic—quite apart from the risk of larrikins frightening them—and remind the entire community that skill had complex meanings. Horse racing, of course, was very popular and the passion for gardening widespread. Both activities

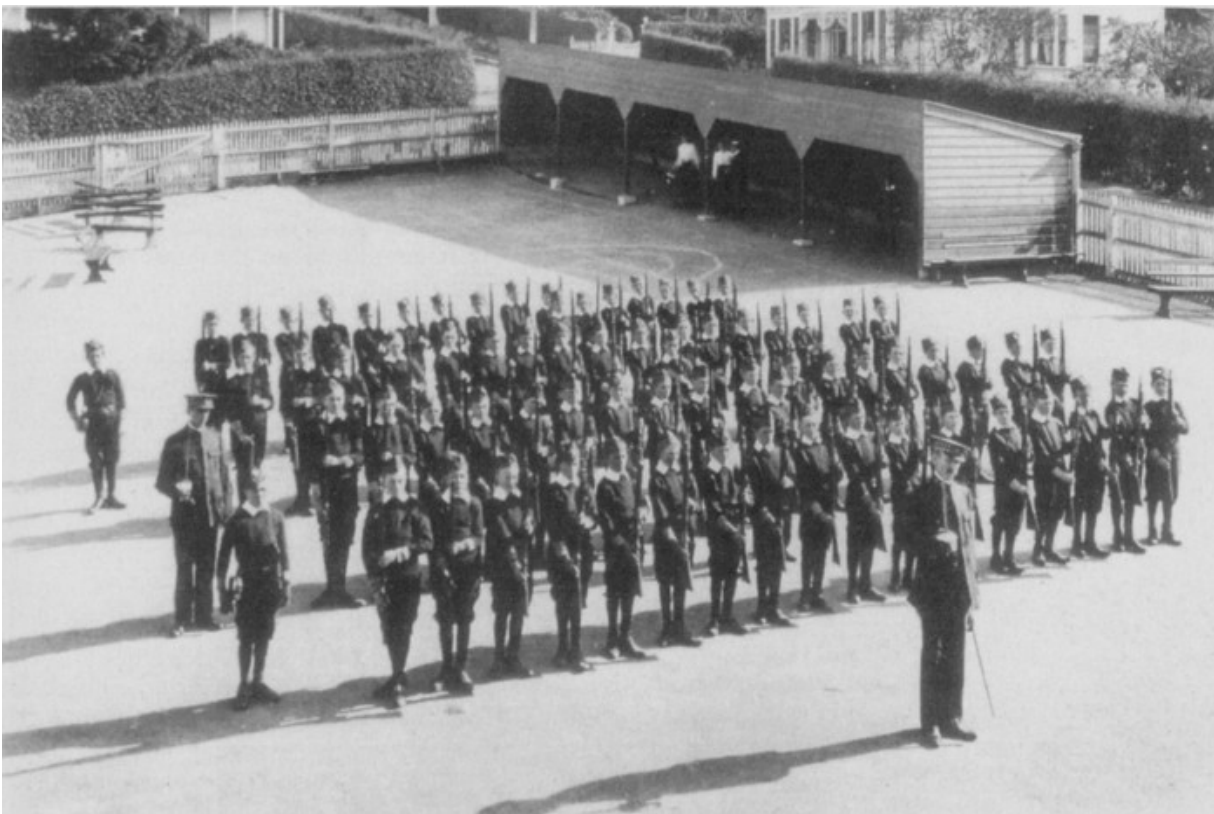
required skill. In popular usage the word skill increasingly came to mean learning by experience. Apprenticeship was but one form.<sup>43</sup>



*Blacksmiths at the Hillside workshops. Although the foreman is easy to identify, trouble starts when you try to spot the leading hands, let alone distinguish the skilled from their helpers and unskilled labourers. The very fact that they are photographed together shows that the distinction had limited if any social significance. Hocken Library.*

Other considerations modified the importance attached to the distinction between skilled and unskilled. Although apprentice-based crafts dominated the local occupational structure, largely because of their importance in building and metal working, most labourers living in the area assisted skilled men at their work. In the metal trades, as we saw, skilled men had unskilled helpers. The technological changes of the second industrial revolution, especially the development of electrically driven machines, helped to transform a clear division into a complex gradation. The proliferation of machinists—in the turners', bootmakers', and furniture makers' shops—measured the shift and brought wage rates closer together. As a rule, as tradesmen invariably confirmed, helpers and machinists were skilled. Government officials increasingly

classified them as ‘semi-skilled’ and the men themselves, in describing their own occupations, often inflated them. Many machinists in the workshops, for instance, described themselves as ‘engineers’ to the agents of *Stone’s Directory*. The skilled men did not seem to mind. When they talked of unskilled labour they invariably said that they were not discussing their helpers and strikers but the navvies in the Maintenance and Way Department.



*The schools taught discipline and teamwork, among other things. During the 1900s Caversham School’s Cadet Corps proved popular with boys. This photograph was taken in 1909, when nationalism and Imperial enthusiasm climaxed. Hocken Library.*

Compulsory education, which saw over 90 per cent of all children at school by 1900, helped to destroy the cultural differences that had existed between trades and labour in Victorian Britain. Compulsory education also changed the pattern of recruitment for skilled trades. Any boy who passed Standard Four met the educational requirement for apprenticeship, and compulsory schooling to the age of fifteen meant that most did so. Unfortunately the complex problems involved in constructing an inter-generational profile of the population, let alone a particular workforce,

make it impossible to estimate whether apprentices were recruited predominantly from skilled families. Letters to Sidey seeking apprenticeships for sons suggest, however, that unskilled fathers were as likely to seek such positions as skilled fathers. Compulsory education equipped an increasing proportion of the unskilled and their children to change occupational class. The skilled maintained a high level of job stability across the period but a high proportion of the small number who entered skilled occupations had previously held unskilled jobs and almost 10 per cent of those who left skilled

jobs took up semi-or unskilled ones. For some the process of ageing provided the catalyst. Robert Ferguson, listed as a labourer in 1909, had been a bootmaker and active in the union during the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>44</sup> Technological change often demoted an entire skill, like that of the stonemason. The unskilled, unlike the skilled, were highly volatile. They recruited heavily from the skilled and the semi-skilled and a high proportion 'rose' to become officials or joined the ranks of the skilled, white-collar and self-employed. Analysis of the occupations of the fathers of brides and grooms also suggests that the skilled/unskilled divide had no social importance as such.<sup>45</sup>

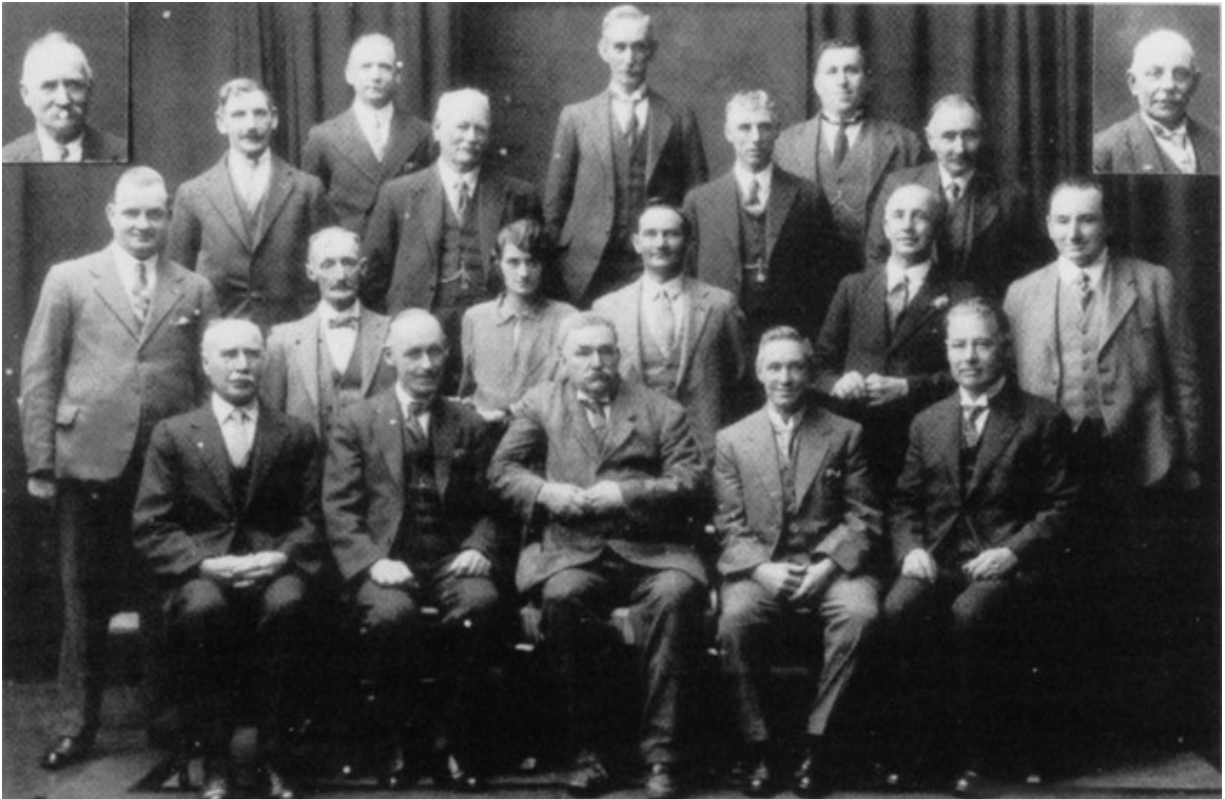
It seems likely that unskilled men who worked in close conjunction with skilled men would have absorbed the central values of the subculture of skill. They may have looked for that sort of work because they were attracted to such values. Although there is some evidence that building labourers passed themselves off as carpenters, especially in areas where the union was weak or non-existent, the unskilled in the Hillside workshops seem largely to have accepted the skilled/unskilled divide.<sup>46</sup> In general, however, the mobility pattern of the unskilled suggests that most of them preferred freedom of choice to skill, especially when wage relativities were slight. Money allowed them to buy into domestic respectability, and they seem to have done so. Everybody ate meat at least once a day, often twice, desserts and cakes galore and a roast dinner on Sunday. Mabel Cartwright did not even think it noteworthy that everybody on The Flat lived in a single-unit house on its own section. 'All have a strip of garden, the very necessary "front" room, no matter how small it is, & whatever else is in it there is a piano & mirror of some kind. Most have coloured flowers about

—paper ones, & all the windows are strictly closed.’ A German visitor, surprised, remarked: ‘The single home is general everywhere. I cannot remember ever having seen two families living in the same house. A garden, too, is never wanting ....’ He also noted that every house boasted a bathroom as well as a piano.<sup>47</sup>

Self-respect, pride in their work, the conviction that their labour was their capital, and a belief in the importance of their work to the new society united skilled and unskilled rather than dividing them. Nor did wage differentials create much of a division. Shortages of labour throughout the nineteenth century had brought the rates of pay for skilled and unskilled workers much closer together than they were in Britain, the United States or Australia. The trend continued between 1900 and the war.<sup>48</sup> For those not employed by government, of course, the Arbitration Court set minimum rates but the market determined what a man could earn. Some unskilled jobs paid a higher hourly rate than skilled jobs, although they were usually seasonal and required intense physical effort. Minimum award rates in the Northern Industrial District for 1910 reflected a differential of between three and four shillings a day. Government and Court, partly influenced by the unions’ demand for a ‘living wage’ and partly by a belief in equality, moved to establish a minimum wage for unskilled men. In the private sector the differential in awards remained approximately the same; in the railways the differential almost disappeared during the war. In 1918, when the Arbitration Court promulgated core rates for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled work, the differential was 5d an hour or 3/6d an eight-hour day (around 25 per cent). During the war, however, the actual relativity almost disappeared and it became difficult to recruit young boys for apprenticeships.<sup>49</sup>

On The Flat and in Dunedin generally, the Court’s wage differential for skilled and unskilled appears to have been smaller. In 1905 the General Labourers’ Union wanted a minimum wage of 1/1d an hour for navvies and those engaged on building sites, other than building labourers (who belonged to the General Labourers’ Union).<sup>50</sup> The Court granted between 10d and 1/2d an hour, mistakenly assuming that it was dealing with building labourers. When the union went back before the Court in 1908 on behalf of navvies, Boreham, who handled the case, pointed out that such

men were not ‘unskilled’—he detested the word—but required, besides great strength and endurance, some knowledge of grading, crowning and formation work. He demanded 9s a day. The Court ruled that a pick and shovel man should get a minimum of 1s an hour, building labourers 1/2d, and ‘All labourers employed on any other unskilled work should get not less than 10d per hour’.<sup>51</sup> In 1910 the Court raised the minimum to 1s an hour and awarded quarrymen 1/3d an hour (which had, apparently, been the actual rate for some time).<sup>52</sup> The top of the labourers’ minimum award rate, in short, was as high as the same rate for various skilled men and appreciably higher than the hourly rate for skilled metal workers in the workshops (although their regularity of earnings and job security provided compensation). Short time, seasonal lay-offs, and time lost due to bad weather, perennial problems for navvies, affected carpenters and painters as badly. In Caversham the predominance of ‘chippies’ and the virtual absence of navvies only made this situation more striking.



*This photograph of the leaders of the General Labourers’ Union 1905–1931, with a war-worn MacManus in the centre, clearly reveals their respectability. They too asserted their claim to public respect and the skilled no longer denied them their due. Hocken Library.*

As the rising cost of living became a major political issue, the Department of Labour tried to gather information about actual wages as distinct from award rates (for the award set a minimum but the market determined the actual rate). The results were tabulated by sex, age and trade, and indicate a situation of considerable complexity. In bootmaking, for instance, the finishers, once the elite, enjoyed more regular work (on average) than the clickers or benehmen, but clickers older than forty-five did slightly better, as did benehmen between thirty-one and forty-five years old. Younger and older cohorts of benehmen did very poorly, however, averaging only twenty-four and twenty-nine weeks' work per year respectively. One can immediately see that the hourly rate gives no indication of annual income. In the metal trades, excluding the state-owned workshops, the skilled men averaged between forty-two and forty-nine weeks' work a year and take-home pay increased with age. Blacksmiths' average take-home pay varied somewhat with the industry, men in agricultural-implement manufacturing earning more than farriers, but the eight men over forty-five averaged only £2/12/9d a week. Coach-building blacksmiths, by contrast, averaged almost fifty-two weeks' work in 1911 and the men averaged £2/16/ 6d. Clickers and benehmen did appreciably better than all but the coach-building blacksmiths. Fitters and turners, although working fewer and fewer weeks as they aged (the over forty-five cohort averaged 34.9 weeks that year), earned over £3/3s a week. The boilermakers did almost as well. Carpenters and joiners averaged between forty and forty-seven weeks' work and take-home pay rose with age until the men were about forty-five years old. It then dropped away from £3 to £2/15s a week. Skilled helpers in these trades generally worked fewer days at a lower hourly rate. Navvies were not much worse off, however, and earned appreciably more before the age of about twenty-five. It seems clear from the tables that the brunt of short time fell on older skilled men and the unskilled. Young men, whether skilled or not, were also vulnerable because in all occupations the unmarried were laid off first.<sup>53</sup>

The growing number and status of semi-professional and white-collar occupations also made skilled and unskilled tend to think of themselves as manual workers. Teachers led the way. In 1881 most teachers earned less than skilled men. By 1911 this relativity had been reversed and teachers

earned, on average, 19 per cent more than skilled men<sup>54</sup> The rise in the wages of white-collar women workers also unsettled an old relativity. Moreover, in the new society which emerged between the 1890s and 1920s, a society in which classification became an obsession, the middle classes assumed that white-collar occupations had more status than skilled manual ones. There were two reasons for this: white-collar work did not usually entail getting dirty hands, and employers increasingly required a higher educational qualification. Yet neither skilled nor unskilled men accepted this assumption of higher status, let alone the idea that white-collar workers deserved higher pay.<sup>55</sup> What they knew of white-collar men in Caversham doubtless reinforced their feelings. By and large that stratum was one of the most volatile, recruiting from all other strata and especially from unskilled and semi-skilled.

Colonial experience also shaped relations between skilled and unskilled. The cultural tensions between the skilled and unskilled in regions of Britain may have been weakened by the common experience of living in steerage on the long voyage out, a voyage that was, in some senses, an apprenticeship for life in the New World. And the New World no less than steerage confirmed a rough equality. The Masters and Servants Act had hardly ever been used in New Zealand and workers could always come and go as they pleased.<sup>56</sup> Hard physical work was needed as well as basic skills to clear bush, knock up housing, drain swamps, plant crops and gardens, make roads, lay railways and dig ditches. Most people, including farmers and runholders, engaged in hard physical work. The gold rushes further consolidated equality as a basic principle of social organisation. Caversham's elite had worked their way to success and the major employers still worked at their trades. In addition, the colony still provided alternatives to wage labour, such as goldmining and rabbiting, in which social distinctions dissolved. Many families, like Sam Ingram's, had brothers in both skilled and labouring jobs. The Victorian notion of 'the people' became more inclusive in the New World, at least for Pakeha, and allowed egalitarianism to take root and flourish.

Although the divide between skilled and unskilled was weakened, it did not disappear (as the formation of the Railway Tradesmen's Association made clear). Several of those interviewed indicated a certain disdain for

unskilled work ('he was just a milk lorry driver', one man explained). Helpers may have absorbed the values of the skilled but the skilled tended to look down on them; they also earned less and (outside the railway workshops) had more chance of being laid off or put on short time. There is also enough evidence from the railway workshops to suggest that tensions could flare even here when helpers went on to skilled work. The fact that the unskilled tended to be either Catholic or lapsed Protestants, for they were under-represented in all Protestant congregations, also suggests that a cultural division continued to be important.<sup>57</sup> The absence of Irish-Catholic immigrants from the ASC&J further strengthens the suspicion that throughout this period the Catholic/Protestant difference often overlapped the unskilled/skilled distinction. Religious heritage (rather than active membership) complicated any meaning of class.

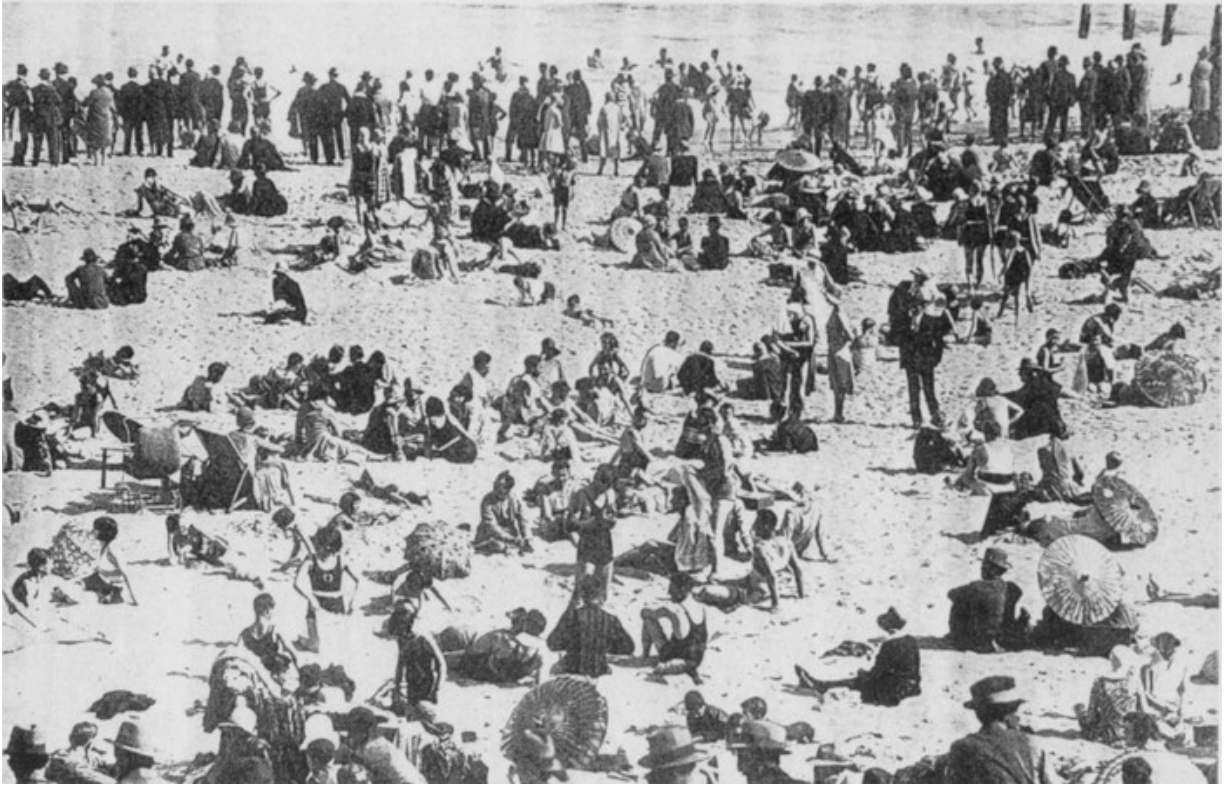
The absence of the unskilled from the Protestant churches indicates another source of cultural tension although it did not coincide neatly with the distinction between skilled and unskilled. Many skilled men and masters did not attend church (even if they sent their children to Sunday school). Some unskilled attended (and the wives of both groups were much more likely to attend). Lister's trenchant attack on the assumption that church attendance meant respectability suggests that the idea had widespread acceptance. Mrs Brown certainly thought so and Mrs Lee may have before being disgraced in the eyes of the respectable by giving birth to an illegitimate child. Men were less likely to think so, however, and declining church attendance across the period suggests that the link weakened considerably.<sup>58</sup> John A. Lee's novel, *Children of the Poor*, was a vehement attack on the moral hypocrisy of church folk, and much of the popular animosity towards prohibitionists reflected a similar view.

As church attendance became less clearly related to respectability people often used the terms 'rough' and 'refined' to identify a cultural division within the working class. Mabel Cartwright dreamt of being sent to a 'more refined' area and noted signs of slovenly speech. Laura Bolton, the shop tailoress, remarked on the divide between herself and the factory tailoresses ('We were thought of as snobs I guess'). The women at the match factory were widely known as 'matchy tarts', in part because they smoked in the street during their lunch break and engaged in banter with passing men.<sup>59</sup>

The complex interrelationships between skilled/unskilled, Protestant/Catholic, church attender/non-attender, refined and rough make imprecision not just inevitable but of the essence. Somewhere in this imprecise social and cultural space MacManus and Boreham found a ready audience. Navvies who worked together in sizeable numbers, supervised by men who had not been recruited from their ranks, may have been most responsive to them. The idea is plausible rather than proven. Members of the Labourers' Union may have found the new discourse centred on class appealing in part because it rendered older distinctions irrelevant, whether based on religion or refinement.

#### IV

Inequalities of income, wealth, power and status existed in Caversham, but old men, widows and deserted wives with families bore the brunt (although only when they were already poor and often when they could not move). None of these inequalities, taken by themselves, translated into status or esteem and none of them seemed very large by British standards. Nor did people want them to be large or important. Work may have been the ruin of the drinking classes in England, but here everybody worked and work constituted a source of identity, esteem, pleasure and, for Protestants, moral purpose. Egalitarianism expressed these complex variations on inherited British patterns. The importance of egalitarianism in New Zealand society has long been recognised but rarely analysed. Like mutualism, voluntarism and localism, the ideology of egalitarianism was implicit as a principle of social organisation; like them it usually had no articulate champion, yet like them it also contained and modified the meanings which class could assume and shaped Caversham's social pattern. Culture shaped society. The war's significance lay partly in the fact that each of these implicit principles became contentious but each was reaffirmed.



*The beach provided a social melting pot where people from all walks of life shared the same space. Otago Witness.*

Any analysis of egalitarianism must start with the idea of equality. The belief that men were born equal has a long history in Western society, as does the idea that the next world will see a dramatic inversion of this world's status and power (I use the word men advisedly because of its gendered ambiguity). The early Protestants developed the idea of equality further (they extended it only to members of the congregation but that distinction broke down in the colony by the 1880s).<sup>60</sup> Political philosophers began assuming that all men enjoyed equality in 'a state of nature' and contracted to establish a state the better to secure certain goals. Then, at the end of the eighteenth century, Tom Paine's brilliant defence of equal rights shaped both artisan radicalism and nineteenth-century British Liberalism, two of the decisive ideologies in structuring the subculture of skilled migrants (Protestantism is often considered a third).<sup>61</sup> The idea was abroad and spread, aided by revolutions in the United States and France. Burns armed the creed with memorable lines (although the Scots accepted the democratic faith earlier and more generally than the English). Jeremy Bentham, another Scot, declared 'the greatest happiness of the greatest

number' the sole measure of political action. The Victorian English, led by the Nonconformists, skilfully probed the source and meaning of status, severing it from birth. The frontiers of the New World provided fertile soil for the idea of equality. Shortages of labour, the importance of physical work, the ease of geographic mobility and wide opportunities for self employment, not to mention the wide availability of land, helped fashion a more equal society than that which had been left behind. Not only did the new society offer greater equality of opportunity, but the conspicuous role played by chance made the degree of success something of a lottery. Any affront jarred this widespread colonial egalitarianism. The *Cyclopaedia*, that weighty memorial to self-made men, declared 'that honest men of all callings are all equally entitled to social sympathy and respect; a wharfinger not less than the chairman of a harbour board, a ganger not less than the manager of railways, if he is worthy as a man and conscientious as a worker'.<sup>62</sup>

Yet equality, like class, had various meanings. The word meant equality of position, as in equality before the law or one person, one vote; it also meant equality of status or rank; and it meant equality of material conditions or 'levelling'. In these cases equality referred to attributes of persons. Equality could also refer to actions, and in this sense came to be bracketed with the idea of freedom; equal opportunity is the best known example. People transposed that idea into an almost endless number of keys during the nineteenth century. When the colonists arrived, equality of opportunity already meant an equal chance to go where one pleased, to become a master, or to make a fortune.<sup>63</sup> It came to mean an equal chance to obtain an education, or an equal chance to walk the beaches, go fishing, graze livestock etc. In Caversham it certainly had all these meanings, and each meaning spawned a right, but it also came to include equality of status. All work was equally valuable to the colony's development. As a result any man was good enough to shake the hand of another, on public occasions all men were entitled to be addressed as Mister (or Brother), and in informal contexts they usually used first names. The various aspects of equality reinforced each other.<sup>64</sup>

Skilled men translated equality into economic practice. The idea of the standard rate for the job embodied the concept of equality within crafts, but

the tendency, both in the railway workshops and in Arbitration Court awards, to define a core rate for all skilled work acknowledged the shrinking importance of craft distinctions and the desirability of equality. The process paralleled the erosion of membership within the Protestant churches and was intimately related to the idea of a standard price. The attempt by many skilled unions to incorporate less skilled men, while clearly in part designed to control them more effectively, also acknowledged equality. The ASRS constantly struggled to equalise conditions and privileges for all workers and workers generally began to demand a 'living wage' and 'the right to work' for all men. In the period 1900–20 the friendly societies and Hillside's Sick Benefit Society increasingly grappled with how to provide for workmates and neighbours who had not insured themselves against sickness, accidents or unemployment. Passing round the hat, subscription lists and benefits seemed increasingly inadequate. Members of the ASC&J were besieged by requests when they ended their benefit scheme. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers went through a similar process.

A tension existed, of course, between the widespread belief that people should provide for their own welfare by working hard and saving and the realisation that natural or economic calamities might make this impossible. Pensions provided for some groups outside the labour market, such as the old, widows with dependent children, and the victims of natural calamities. Workers' Compensation provided for the victims of accidents and the Railways Department provided for its own employees. The government's National Provident Fund, which began operations in 1911, also made it easier for working men to provide for the welfare of their families.<sup>65</sup> As working men increasingly concluded that capitalism itself inflicted calamities, however, they began to elaborate new criteria for assistance based on need.

While men and women in Caversham stretched the idea of equality to demand adequate provision for men unable to work, or unable to earn an adequate wage, they also stretched it to incorporate those who left skilled work to set up on their own account. All the evidence suggests that good wishes accompanied such men. Success generated neither envy nor hostility. But the idea of 'rags to riches', a central part of the American

version of equal opportunity, found no echoes in Caversham. Nobody exalted monopolists or the ‘captains of industry’. Nor did working men who became masters reject egalitarian values, any more than they rejected old mates or kin. If they stayed in the area they continued to attend their friendly society and their church, and to follow their favourite sports teams. Some, as we have seen, continued to belong to their union. In Caversham, of course, even the self-employed, small masters and shopkeepers were not necessarily better off than workers with regular employment. Although some wealthy families lived along Forbury Road and in St Clair, they worked in the city and were not especially visible from the Main South Road. Many, like Dawson, whose estate was sworn at £250,000 when he died in 1923, had worked their way up without abandoning the manners and customs of their youth. In some respects, in short, Caversham had some of the characteristics of a one-class community. Shiel might send his children to secondary school in Australia but he participated in The Flat’s Catholic community.<sup>66</sup>

Egalitarianism involved a complex set of attitudes. H. G. Oxley, in one of the few studies of the subject, has identified six characteristics of egalitarian groups. First, they tend to believe themselves unjustly oppressed or denigrated by the rest of society (e.g. the law favours the rich or workers are as good as anyone else); second, they tend to deny the superiority of those in ‘superior’ groups and often claim moral superiority (as in ‘he may be rich but...’, or such phrases as ‘a real white man’ or ‘one of nature’s gentlemen’); third, they rank people according to their own criteria (often moral criteria such as human kindness or work-based criteria such as skill); fourth, a tendency to define certain other groups as intrinsically inferior (the lazy, dishonest parasites, unscrupulous monopolists, or such aliens as the Chinese and ‘Assyrians’); fifth, ambivalence about authority and leadership, especially amongst themselves (which explains the constant rotation of office within all organisations); and sixth, a tendency to object more strenuously to any differentiation of status among themselves—i.e. putting on airs, acting ‘posh’, or claiming recognition—than to the idea of class differentiation generally.<sup>67</sup> Insiders portrayed themselves as manly, honest, practical, down-to-earth and kind; others were effete, dishonest, impractical and selfish. Insiders policed the norms with ridicule and banter.

Nobody objected to people being better off, especially if they had worked hard and gave generously to good causes, so long as they did not claim to be better. Wealth did not command esteem; esteem had to be earned by performance and behaviour. Men respected and admired the successful, but as a rule they deferred only to knowledge, skill and independence.<sup>68</sup>



The Lawyer: "I hear they are going to raise the price of shaves?"

The Barber: "Yes, they're going to charge so much per square yard!"

*Most people would have recognised 'The Lawyer', but whatever the contemporary reference the claim to moral superiority seems clear. Sketcher, no. 2, Aug. 1913.*

In the first decade of the new century the idea of a team and the related one of teamwork came to embody the community's sense of its ideal self, especially for men. Sport powerfully imprinted the idea of a team in the popular mind as the expression of mutualism and egalitarianism. In some senses the ideal grew out of handicraft values of brotherhood and co-operation. The organisation of work in large industrial establishments also

embodied teamwork and may have helped colonial rugby discover the advantages of a specialist division of labour (something the 1905 All Blacks rudely taught the British). But the sporting team and the idea of teamwork also shaped the organisation of work by giving new precision to the idea of co-operation on the basis of equality. Anecdotes and stories conveyed and reinforced the message. ‘Old Vic’ Cavanagh, inventor of the ruck and a legend on The Flat, made teamwork a religion. ‘Teamwork was everything ..., individual brilliance had to be put in its place.’ One well-known story makes the point. ‘Old Vic’ held team talks and would review each player’s previous performance.

[S]tand up Stevie [a front row prop] and let the boys have a look at you. Last Saturday you were well in the public’s eye and got a great hand. I saw you time and time again picking up dropped passes among the backs or setting off on your own in the loose with the ball—always in the picture, eh! ... Who was doing your work in the tough stuff while you were gallivanting around winning the crowd’s applause?<sup>69</sup>

Stevie kept his head down thereafter. The rituals of sport, like the rituals of work, iterated and reiterated egalitarianism.

Rules encoded equality and egalitarianism. ‘Democracy and protestantism reflect the abolition of fundamental political or cognitive privilege.’<sup>70</sup> The idea that God’s laws operated uniformly and predictably in Nature provided a model of how society should operate. This metaphysical viewpoint found expression in rules. Rules governed trades no less than sport. Rules also enjoyed a central role in school, church and home. Children learnt to obey the rules. ‘Stringy’ Wilson, the best-remembered teacher in Caversham School for this period, was famous for his strict insistence on obedience to the rules and his savage punishments for infractions. The dominant morality was one of rule-observance rather than of loyalty to kin or church. In essence it asserted that everyone should be treated the same, no special favours or privileges should be given to anyone, and everyone should be expected to play by the rules.<sup>71</sup> The world of rules had trouble accommodating any difference unless based on sex or age. The Catholics courted suspicion if not hostility by continuing to believe in the sacred authority of priests, God’s willingness to suspend Newton’s laws and their right to different treatment in such matters as education. The heart of the Protestant Political Association’s message was

the rallying cry for democrats everywhere, 'equal opportunities for all, special privileges for none'. The war powerfully reinforced these ideas and spread them into other parts of society.



*A democratic society strongly distrusted impractical, bookish experts and expertise. Thompson's view of Truby King's 'Save the Babies' campaign suggests that many on The Flat reacted lukewarmly to his emphasis on the clock and his stress on breastfeeding. The first Plunket rooms in South Dunedin were opened in 1918. By then the Plunket Society's success in reducing infant mortality had eroded the earlier suspicions. Circumstantial evidence suggests that pro temperance Protestants led the conversion to scientific child rearing. Sketcher, 1915.*

Much the same could be said about New Zealand or other Western societies, but in Caversham the rules embodied the notion that fairness

consisted in treating everyone the same. Sunday school and corporal punishment taught children to obey. Gossip, banter and practical jokes policed the behaviour of adults. One Caversham fireman with a marked English accent, for instance, had the 'mickey' taken out of him when his mates unlocked the station and the 'fallen girls' from Rockside came in, removed all his clothes, and locked him outside (before proceeding on their way to the Citadel). Similarly, in 1895 the Court sentenced Lister to three months' hard labour in prison for libelling a leading prohibitionist, A. S. Adams, by accusing him of having stolen firewood in his youth. Led by John McIndoe and Hugh Gourlay the community rallied to pay the fine and 851 men signed a petition urging his release.<sup>72</sup> Among the successful the imperative to treat everyone the same could take savage forms. Arthur Harrison (of Methvens) sacked his own son first, presumably to clear himself of any suspicion of playing favourites. He doubtless exceeded the community's expectations but did not violate them (his wife delivered food parcels in her motor car).<sup>73</sup> Judging from the recollections of C. W. Shiel's children, the greater the wealth the more insistent the parents that their children recognise that 'they are just as good as you are, perhaps better'.<sup>74</sup>

In a community such as Caversham, dominated by journeymen and masters, egalitarian attitudes spawned an easy confidence rather than hostility or aggression. Even the Chinese benefited. Miss Shiel recalled that 'My cousins used to tease the life out of them' but when the Chinese began retaliating with displays of armed force, the community's sense of fairness, accepted by the parents, supported the Chinese.<sup>75</sup> Because of complaints from angry citizens, the police smashed the Kelly gang, which tormented everyone around Forbury Corner.<sup>76</sup> In 1915, when a couple of young men provoked a Chinese resident to defend himself and the jury found the victim guilty, locals promptly organised a subscription list on behalf of the victim (he promptly gave the money to the Public Hospital and the Belgian Relief Fund).<sup>77</sup> Interviews with those who grew up in Caversham across this period suggest, however, that by World War I 'respectable' parents (at least) taught their children to respect the Chinese and especially their industry and frugality. Boys continued to 'raid' the market gardens but children who grew up nearby visited their huts and even helped them work the treadle pumps. Sixty years later their fireworks displays and their spectacular

contributions to community parades and processions were also remembered with affection.<sup>78</sup>

Affronts occurred. Symbolic 'tory' politicians, notably Massey, would get a chiacking when they spoke in the South Dunedin Town Hall. Such moments constituted rituals in which the community affirmed its solidarity and its complacent certainty that it knew what was right (although his supporters presumably found such behaviour reprehensible). A certain type of immigrant could also trigger irritation by affecting superiority. Mabel Cartwright recorded meeting one, the wife of an ex-minister, who 'speaks contemptuously of colonial life, of labourers etc.... Uses little peculiar words and phrases wh brand her as English.'<sup>79</sup> Such immigrants jarred the community's egalitarian temper, but they only served to reinforce the community's values and its solidarity. Egalitarianism underlay and policed collectivism by defining the social and cultural limits to individualism. It had deep roots among skilled workers, both in the handicraft trades and the factories. Nor did masters change their tune when they achieved economic independence. The war powerfully reinforced the connection between equality and sameness.

Egalitarianism also shaped the ideology of the Lib-Lab movement, both locally and nationally, and the socialists later developed the idea as a critique of the Lib-Lab tradition and the basis for a new social order. In the male world of work and leisure it brooked no challenge. Tensions existed, however, and men had to accept the values of the community to be considered members (the lodges and unions helped determine the acceptability of transients). But if egalitarianism made inequality palatable, inequality continued to exist and had some social implications.

Each value, or principle, has its own place and circumstances in which it flourishes; egalitarianism in the bars, for example, and stratification in the private party. Each has certain other values with which it lives symbiotically; egalitarianism with masculinity and sex separation; stratification with the home and family solidarity.<sup>80</sup>

Wives and mothers had the complex job of charting the relative claims of equality and inequality within social life, of deciding who came through what door, who the children could play with, and how the family would advertise its sense of worth and success. Perhaps the importance of that task helped persuade their men folk that 'paid work' might unfit them for that

most demanding home duty, negotiating the shifting expectations of a world at once equal and unequal and training children to do the same. This division of labour possibly helps explain the tension which some observers have considered central to relations between men and women in New Zealand.<sup>[81](#)</sup>



*The campaign for women's rights aroused deep anxieties in many men (and women) because it seemed to threaten the 'natural' gender relationships. Jokes about who wore the pants and who would read the newspaper first abounded. Budget, 26 Aug. 1910.*

Women stood in the same anomalous relationship to male egalitarianism as they did to male definitions of social class. In some senses men thought of them as outside or other, a source of complication and tension, and this tension may have been increased by the common contemporary association between social purity and women. By and large, whatever their ambivalence, most men subscribed to the new ideology of domesticity and cast their claims for higher wages in those terms. Yet the articulation of a political ideology centred on class created tensions with domesticity, especially when men defined class in terms of an idealised male camaraderie on the job. It is not clear whether the seductive prophets of male mateship enjoyed much popularity in Caversham, for the very fact that

much handicraft production was still domestic production may have provided barren soil. Men who might have found such views attractive, like the husbands of Mrs Lee and Mrs Brown, often disappeared anyway, leaving behind the solid family men who spent most of their leisure time working on their houses and gardens. Yet the lodges articulated startling fantasies of male community, although the slow admission of women to membership must have modified them. Jokes about the moral tyranny of wives also proliferated during this period. Despite such evidence of tensions men and women gave roughly the same support to prohibition; when women dealt with women they accepted the values of egalitarianism; they stressed these values to their children; and all the interviews show that parents closed ranks in bringing up their children. At home, as at work, men and women created a culture predicated on the desire to resist and contain disruptive change.<sup>82</sup>

In this intimately small society honour and shame, the measure of respectability won or lost, meant different things to men and women. Men obtained honour from having a job and supporting their families. Everyone agreed on that. Most people also agreed that dirty men, men who swore or drank too much, or did so in public places, tarnished their honour. Women had to be more careful, whether single or married. Women's class position was mediated through their ties to men. Their sexual activities largely determined their honour, 'loose' or 'vulgar' behaviour bringing shame to themselves and their families. While definitions of 'loose' behaviour varied, and much depended on context, women who became pregnant and had no man to marry incurred the deepest shame. The child inherited the dishonour. The Salvation Army's home for unmarried mothers and their weekly parade to the Citadel provided a stark reminder. Otherwise, as one would expect in an egalitarian society, the most shameful behaviour occurred elsewhere, and could be read about in *Truth*. While locals had a keen eye for the finer gradations of honour and shame among themselves, they closed ranks before outsiders. When Steve Boreham died, knocked over late one night as he left a hotel, thousands of people followed his coffin to the Southern Cemetery. Both the Labour Party, which urged its members to attend, and The Flat closed ranks to honour a leader. The *Otago Daily Times* felt obliged to report his death, but ignored the funeral, which was conducted

according to Catholic rites.<sup>83</sup>

People created their own sense of community, and any definition of community could serve if it upheld local honour and egalitarianism. Yet the central organising principles of that local society—mutualism, voluntarism, egalitarianism—presupposed high levels of literacy, high levels of skill in forming and running organisations, and high levels of social and geographic mobility. They knew the importance of literacy and fiercely defended free and secular education against the merest hint of danger; they formed organisations in profusion, although only when confronted with conscription did anyone speak for ‘voluntaryism’; yet nobody (but Thorn) ever mentioned transience as a central characteristic of society. He bemoaned it as a source of apathy but it underpinned egalitarianism by embodying equality of opportunity. The freedom to come and go as one wished, the freedom to become a master or even swap jobs, found expression in high rates of transience. Whether Fairburn is right in arguing that the nineteenth-century colony became one of the most atomised societies anywhere need not detain us, but he is certainly right in pointing to atomisation for it constitutes the inner core of all modern societies. Yet atomisation and egalitarianism create a profound sense of alienation, of a world in which few social markers guide the wanderer. ‘What ... [people] really want is to belong ...’: lodges and unions (with their elaborate system of clearances for coping with strangers) provided foci. So did churches and schools, and Caversham itself. By 1911 so did the ‘labour movement’, and it offered an instrument for balancing between fear and desire.<sup>84</sup>

## V

The existence of unions and the political history of The Flat remind us not only that people wanted a sense of community but that equality remained a dream. It is not entirely clear what led to the formation of unions although the concentration of sufficient numbers of literate journeymen in the larger towns obviously constituted a precondition for organisation. In small handicraft trades, as we saw, unions did not exist. A strong sense of the craft’s identity and importance also helped.<sup>85</sup> Given these preconditions, men formed unions to protect their wages and ‘customary’ conditions,

including control of the labour process. Above all they formed unions to ensure that they received a 'fair wage' for their skill and their physical effort, and 'fair' meant sufficient to look after their own welfare. While this explains the formation of locally based unions, members of the ASC&J and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers wanted to retain their entitlement to benefits if not the traditions of conviviality, like the members of friendly societies. They soon adapted their organisations to defend their 'customary' rights. Other trades organised to protect newly won rights which could only be retained if all employers granted them, like the forty-four-hour week for bootmakers, and then found further reasons for union as they confronted new threats to their skill. The Chinese 'menace' and the substitution of boys for journeymen provided the key catalysts in the late 1880s, but the success of unions, even if stopped short by the rout of the Maritime Council, fuelled the growth and forged a potent memory of what might be achieved through combination.<sup>86</sup> The power of this memory helps explain why unions grew most dramatically when the Arbitration Court granted them sufficient recognition to successfully seek improved wages, conditions and preference. Even Reeves complained that the unions resorted to the Court too frequently.<sup>87</sup> When the Court also began granting preference to unskilled workers (not quite the 'right to work' but a lot better than living in the jungle), unionisation exploded. At Hillside, however, the men formed a branch of the ASRS only when they wanted to put pressure on the union to protect their sectional rights, a desire which finally resulted in secession.

The growth of unions, and the appeal of Seddon and the Liberals to working men, helped to legitimise a language of class which cut across other loyalties. In the 1880s many unions, like the lodges, would not permit any discussion of political or religious issues. Religious issues remained taboo, but all unions became politically active in the 1890s. Tensions still existed between some trades, and tensions could easily flare if skilled labourers began doing work which skilled men wanted to keep, but each union recognised the wider import of the slogan, 'United We Stand, Divided We Fall'. Industrial unionism—which condemned the divisive nature and cowardliness of craft unionism—only slowly won acceptance in Dunedin. When the Red Feds later ran amok, they could count their local champions on the fingers of one hand.<sup>88</sup> Yet during the war, as inflation and

‘profiteering’ persuaded many that capitalists could always pay more to their exploited workers, the ASRS affiliated to the syndicalist Transport Workers’ Advisory Board, the city’s unions formed a Central Labour Office, and then played a major role in establishing the syndicalist Alliance of Labour. Even the ASC&J marched down the same path. The new rhetoric of class, in short, constituted a fulcrum for achieving a wider unity than the idea of a craft or trade allowed. The Guild-Socialist dream of worker control reconciled craft and class between 1916 and the early 1920s, but they became increasingly uncomfortable bedfellows.

In some respects the growth of unionism represented another expression of mutual assistance and self help. Respectability fused a private and public claim to equality. The growing importance of family and home, and the erosion of an exclusively male social life centred on the pub, the lodge and the workshop, did not represent the subordination of working men to a middle class. As we have seen, most of Caversham’s ‘middle class’ consisted of masters who had served apprenticeships. It is rather that working men refined and adapted respectability to accommodate their own distinctive egalitarian values within a claim to be as civilised as anyone else, a claim which entitled them to equal respect. Lister began policing new standards of family behaviour, as when he reprimanded ‘the stepmother down St Kilda way: “And don’t you think a kid 12 years of age is too small to do the family washing and get licked if it ain’t done quick?”’ When he berated the members of the Gaiety Vaudeville Company for immorality, he also reflected the shift (they marched on his premises, threw lead type and ink everywhere, and gave the old fellow a black eye).<sup>89</sup> In the 1890s the lodges began meeting in church halls rather than pubs and then built their own halls so that they could organise dances rather than male carousals. Old members grumbled at the loss of conviviality but the times were changing. The Independent Oddfellows organised Miriam Rebeka Lodge in 1895 and Manchester’s Loyal Caversham began debating the ‘formation of female and juvenile branches ...’. In 1906 the lodge began enrolling women relatives of male members for the ‘medical privileges of the lodge ...’.<sup>90</sup> By 1920 Caversham had only four hotels left, compared to eight in 1900 and fourteen in 1882. The township now had none. The belief in self-improvement and mutual improvement increasingly found

expression in familial domesticity. Respectability not only meant a concern—obsessive in some cases—with cleanliness, tidiness and public image, but a fulcrum for obtaining community respect. The unions proudly led the way. When William Sullivan, tinsmith at Hillside and president of the ASRS from 1921 until 1923, resigned from the union's highest office because the amount of travel required prevented him from fulfilling his responsibilities to his family, nobody suggested that he had his priorities wrong.<sup>91</sup>

In the election of 1890, and in every following election, the skilled workers of Caversham effectively used the democratic franchise to protect their control of the labour process. Their influence on the state-owned railways, an influence based both on workshop culture and political power, proved decisive. Between 1900 and 1922 they also used the political process to extend and legitimise their aspirations. There has been a tendency to forget that it was in fact a Liberal–Labour Government. W. H. Oliver's brilliant essay, 'Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern', dismissed the importance of class and insisted that New Zealand society had always been characterised by a high floor, a low ceiling, and high levels of social mobility. His subsequent analysis of the Liberals—no mention of Labour—as the architects of a bureaucratic machine more dedicated to social control than social justice contributes to the same end.<sup>92</sup> Tim McIvor's biography of Ballance and David Hamer's study of the New Zealand Liberals create a similar impression.<sup>93</sup>

There is considerable merit in Oliver's views about social structure if not his jaundiced view of the Liberal achievement. The working men of Caversham might well have agreed that equality of income and wealth was more marked than inequality, at least compared to Britain, but in part that was why they had migrated and what they fought to achieve.<sup>94</sup> They would have been surprised, however, as would most workers on The Flat, by Oliver's representation of the Liberals, with no reference to Labour, as instruments of a rather peevish gospel of social control. The evidence from all sources indicates that the skilled men took enormous pride in their government and its achievement in making New Zealand not just a 'working man's paradise' but 'social laboratory' to the world. The concept of 'social control' rests upon a rather simple typology, however, which

posits the values of self control and self improvement as ‘middle class’ and imagines them in opposition to a less inhibited and more spontaneous ‘working class’. If forced to make such an improbable choice Caversham’s skilled men, indeed many of the unskilled too, would have opted to join the ‘middle class’. They believed that self control and discipline—which included industry, thrift, punctuality and sobriety—marked the path of individual and mutual improvement, of civilisation itself. If they differed with the city’s middle classes and employers it was not over the importance of self control and social control, or the penalties inflicted on the ‘undeserving’, but on the acceptability of collective as against individual strategies for achieving their economic and political goals. In subscribing to socialism, especially when that word took on a revolutionary meaning, they marked out their difference.<sup>95</sup>

Given the success of the skilled in consolidating the norms and values of their crafts as central to the new system of industrial relations, in both public and private sectors, it is not surprising that they looked upon the Lib-Lab Government with such pride. In this the masters and the journeymen were as one. But there was more. The Lib-Lab Government improved conditions for working people with a raft of legislation from the Factory Act (1892) to the Quarries Act (1910). It also erected a set of safety nets for the casualties of industrial life, including Employers’ Liability, Workmen’s Compensation and the Lien Act. The Old Age Pensions Act (1898) was even more important. Mabel Cartwright’s ‘Diary’ indicates that this measure helped ensure that the old lived in decent security and modest comfort. Moreover even the poorest workers could now retire if they met the modest respectability clauses in the Act, and increasing numbers did so. This, by the standards of all other societies, was remarkable, and with the Arbitration Court’s success in introducing the forty-four-hour week, largely accomplished by 1914, helped separate work from leisure. Work, in short, ceased to be a life sentence. Through its departments, notably Railways, the government also offered regular employment, good wages and superannuation. The Labour Department and its factory inspectors (most of them ex-workers or masters, like Hally) also policed conditions in all factories. Historians often mock the statutory definition of a factory as any establishment employing two people, but it ensured that even the handicraft

sector met minimum standards and conditions. In short, as Francis Castles said, the Lib–Lab Government created a wage-workers’ welfare state which assumed regular employment as normative and accepted a large measure of responsibility for creating economic opportunities. Nor did Reform disagree.<sup>96</sup>

The Lib–Lab alliance produced more than this impressive list of measures. Although it is not entirely convincing to claim that ‘The central feature of skilled manual work is some form of social exclusion’, exclusion figured largely in the political and labour-market strategies of skilled workers.<sup>97</sup> The entire ruckus over the ‘boy question’ and the ratio of apprentices to journeymen reflected the skilled workers’ desire to control access to their trades and prevent children being substituted for skilled men. The desire that women receive equal pay for equal work also reflected a resolve to keep women out of jobs which had ‘traditionally belonged to men. The relative unimportance of this issue reflects, however, the fact that women did not seek to take over men’s work and headed for ununionised sectors of the economy.’<sup>98</sup> Control over immigration policy provided the key to ensuring that any immigrants had been socialised into the key values of British society and to ensuring that New Zealand became a closed shop. The Lib–Lab Government’s resolve to exclude ‘Aliens and Undesirables’—one of the key experiments in the ‘social laboratory’ and an entire chapter in Reeves’s *State Experiments*—enjoyed the full support of skilled and unskilled workers in Caversham, on The Flat, and in New Zealand. Nor did anyone dissent after 1890.<sup>99</sup>

These achievements quickly became a matter of intense pride to the masters, journeymen, skilled tradesmen and many unskilled. They thought that they had helped to make the country in their own image. In retrospect we might be surprised that they did not ask for more, but the very customs which shaped their sense of what was normative also acted to limit what they expected.<sup>100</sup> Skill, as we said earlier, defined their identity, their values, and their expectations. It embodied their belief in the dignity of work and their claim that their skill and their labour constituted a species of capital. Skill also provided them with self-respect, the respect of others, influence and power. They defined the terms on which they worked. When threatened they showed a marked tendency to form trade unions but union

strength contributed little to their success in controlling the labour process; rather the reverse (which distinguished their experience from that of the unskilled). The strongest skilled unions on The Flat, the Hillside branch of the ASRS and the ASC&J, did not have the strength to compel employers, even the fragmented employers of the building trades, to recognise a skill that they did not want to buy. Besides, some 40 per cent of carpenters never joined the union and the railway tradesmen did not form a branch of the ASRS until 1912.

Politics constituted an arena or theatre in which men and women debated the meaning of class and bent it to incorporate independence, the family's right to well-being, property in skill and labour, and the centrality of 'fairness' (which itself presupposed the norms of handicraft production). In the 1890s journeymen took the lead in using the rhetoric of class to extend the customary rights of their trades, often in ways that commanded the support of Caversham's masters. The skilled men of the railway workshops set the pace. In their view, their social (and political) importance to the colony's development, no less than their innate dignity as human beings, entitled them to regular work, a wage adequate to support a wife and family in decency and modest comfort (which gave single men and women the chance to save enough for at least a deposit on a house before they married), the right to promotion as their experience grew, not to mention various privileges; and all these regardless of how the enterprise performed. By 1920, indeed, most people agreed that if an employer could not concede most of these rights to his men then he should go out of business. The fact that so many masters and journeymen shared a common work culture and Protestant heritage facilitated this remarkable revolution, but in most trades skilled men used their control over the labour process rather than any union to assert and extend these rights. Unions did not reflect class (indeed they embodied the idea of craft); they tried to create and harness it, however, in order to achieve the dramatic extension of rights.

The politicisation of The Flat's workers—a process which followed hard on the heels of the wave of unionisation which occurred in 1888–90—forged a sense of 'Labour' as a legitimate (and neglected) interest. A handful thought in terms of class, but a majority thought of themselves as 'Labour', a distinct part of 'the people', battling with a privileged and parasitic class. 'Labour' promised redemption from class. The Lib–Lab

Government, in part an unwitting beneficiary of this process, consolidated this sense of a working class and a labour movement so that both survived the defeat of the unions. When the next wave of unionisation slowly began in 1896–1901 it strengthened the labour movement's dominant institutions and leaders. The Red Feds had little direct impact, although they helped erode the legitimacy of Lib–Lab unionism and publicised the idea of industrial unionism. The preference clause probably contributed more to the growth of unionism, locally, than ideology, yet the two were interwoven, for unionism, like socialism, was an ideological construction. In Caversham and on The Flat unionism and socialism increasingly defined each other. Socialism heralded the promise of complete human equality (at least for people on The Flat and in New Zealand generally). Its growing appeal, and the 'intellectual hegemony which the left established' between the late 1880s and the war, reflected its usefulness in diagnosing the central tendencies of capitalism, technological change and the concentration of capital, while preserving such vital values as the belief in the dignity of labour.<sup>101</sup>

The diagnosis appealed because it armed the fears of journeymen and masters and provided a method and a goal, increased state power, for harnessing technological change to human need while recognising human dignity. Socialism, as we now realise, was hostile to aliens and marginalised women. The spread of this new ideology coincided with an explosion of fantasies about an exclusively male working-class culture of whites, often nostalgically projected backwards in time, evoked skilfully by balladeers such as David McKee Wright, Henry Lawson and the popular *Sydney Bulletin*. Socialism, in short, gave the white male working class a teleological significance as the source of humanity's ultimate redemption. This was a choice made.

By 1920 most people believed that capitalism would inevitably disappear, and that socialism now marked the direction of human social evolution away from competition and selfishness towards co-operation and brotherhood. The word 'class' now evoked the possibility of human redemption, fellowship and reconciliation. Non-Christians may have been more open to these teleological meanings, but Socialist, Methodist and Baptist shared the sense that they belonged to an embattled people,

complete with its own sense of history and mission, armed with righteousness. Old Protestant and new Socialist stressed that the humble and meek would both inherit and redeem the earth. The labour movement preached the religion of humanity and brotherhood. If union meant the exclusion of all but white 'Brothers', then by the end of the war it had inscribed its meaning on Socialism. The cry for 'worker control' said it all, yet Caversham's skilled workers had in large measure already achieved that goal. The ideology of socialism, by the end of the war, provided them with an impressive intellectual defence of that control of the labour process.

The heady excitement of the post-war dawn, fuelled by Woodrow Wilson and the Bolsheviks, had led to flights of rhetorical fancy. In Caversham (and Dunedin) craft and locality remained important, despite the new ideologies. Yet the survival of the handicraft trades, the success of skilled men and women in transplanting handicraft norms into the factories, the on-going importance of their local organisations, and their political power reflected the happy conjuncture of human desires and social possibility. The handicraft trades survived and egalitarianism flourished in part because of Caversham's geographic smallness and isolation, the small size of the population, the survival of so many local product markets, and the relative ease with which men (and women) could change jobs, move, and achieve self-employment. Few wealthy people lived in the area and they were too few to sustain their own social activities. Those defined as wealthy and powerful in New Zealand at this time—runholders and merchants—did not live in Caversham, St Clair partially excepted, and played a symbolic role as enemies of the people more effectively because of that fact. As a result, the skilled translated their demographic presence into social and cultural dominance, but the key to their position remained their control over the labour process and the importance of their work. They insisted on both.

There is no doubt that the geographic separateness of The Flat, no less than the nature of capitalism in New Zealand, underpinned this world of artisans and autonomous industrial craftsmen, for it allowed this pre-industrial world to flourish. As a dependent colonial economy, specialising in the export of a narrow range of primary products and importing capital, technology and most manufactured goods, New Zealand stood in a distinctive relation to global or international capitalism. In this period,

indeed, partly because of communities like Caversham, the wealth and power of the wealthiest landowners was sharply reduced and the family farm, analogous to handicraft industry, became the basis of the export sector. The efficiency of that sector, and the Lib–Lab Government’s recognition of that sector’s strategic importance to New Zealand’s future as a ‘white British’ society, also provided part of the economic rationale for Caversham and The Flat. The workshops, of course, were an integral part of a railway system seen as crucial to opening up the country and exporting farm products. Donaghy’s and several engineering workshops, such as Reid and Gray, also specialised in manufacturing such products as binder twine and agricultural equipment for farmers. At Burnside, now a short walk through the old railway tunnel, the manufacturer of chemicals (Kempthorne Prosser), the lime works and the abattoirs also existed to service the farming sector. The rest of the businesses, to some extent, housed, clothed and fed those workers employed to meet the needs of the farming community.

A dual economy emerged in New Zealand, the Lib–Lab Government its midwife. A highly competitive export sector developed, with all but farming and some aspects of butter and cheese manufacturing dominated by large companies—notably the banks, the stock and station companies and the Union Steam Ship Company. The characteristics of that economy facilitated high levels of unionisation in industries such as shipping, the waterfront and the freezing works, but not in farming. The second economy existed to supply the needs of the first, although some, like Lister, Shacklock and Fletcher, dreamed that New Zealand might in time become an imperial power in its own right, a supplier of manufactured goods (if not technology and capital).<sup>102</sup> Journeymen and their helpers easily shared that dream. Whether justified by vision or greed, however, the protective tariff—added to the effective (if falling) tariff which distance gave—sheltered the various small-scale producers from international competition. Equally, within the country the high cost of freight protected local product markets. Thus, doubly protected, men and women could create the sort of society which existed in Caversham and use that base to help create ‘the social laboratory’. Nobody in Caversham or The Flat remarked on the ironic fact that their society could exist only because of an export sector organised on fundamentally different lines and periodically hostile. During the war

farmers replaced squatters as the demons of democracy, and joined the city merchants and financiers as part of a pantheon of villains skilled in the parasitic vices.

John Angus argued that late-nineteenth-century Otago had a remarkably complex economy and society in which the elites were distinguished not by a difference of activity but by their access to credit and their wealth. Only about 4 per cent of the population belonged to the mercantile-financial elites and only those elites were fully engaged in capitalism. They had the power to manipulate markets through social and kin links, access to credit, and wealth. In this sense, however, as E. J. B. Allen noted later (when assessing the prospects for a proletarian revolution in New Zealand as nil), New Zealand's bourgeoisie lived abroad and only its local agents lived here. Most of the people were engaged in restricted forms of market exchange with their surpluses, including their surplus labour, and aspired to achieve some form of independent subsistence. In so far as they had to live by selling their labour they demanded regular employment and a 'living wage'.<sup>103</sup>

New Zealand's early Labour parties, and such powerful local organisations as the Workingman's Political Committee and the various Labour Representation Committees, were remarkably radical by international standards (even though, thanks to the Red Feds, they appeared quite 'moderate' here after 1910).<sup>104</sup> Sustaining that radicalism, however, was the belief that New Zealand could shape its own society and destiny despite the larger world. New Zealand could, like Caversham and The Flat, be sufficient unto itself. And that society, with its human scales and its abundant opportunities for independence, was largely modelled on the handicraft trades. Migration, in brief, had allowed the colonists to fashion from the new environment their dreams about a paradise for working men, and especially skilled working men. They controlled the labour process, they could move when and where they wanted, they had abundant opportunities for self-employment, they could own their own homes and sections, and because of these triumphs they captured significant political power and forged an egalitarian culture.<sup>105</sup> Marxists and revolutionary socialists, syndicalists and even the occasional anarchist, might inveigh against their supine acquiescence in their own oppression, but they did not

often listen. They knew quite a lot about oppression and shouted at the first sign, for they had fled oppression, whether generated by the structures of a semi-feudal aristocratic society or the devouring progress of the machine. Later immigrants, including some of those who arrived in the decade before the war, sometimes found their pride and complacency irritating. They also took time to learn that the language of social analysis—the same as that used in Britain—had acquired new meanings.

The social structure fashioned between 1890 and 1914 survived the war, the depression of the 1930s, and then another war. In that period the method in which skilled work was organised came to characterise the way in which all forms of skill and knowledge were organised. Even in this period some professionals, led by doctors and lawyers, sought to protect their own independence by emulating the ‘new-model’ craft unions of the late Victorian period. As the idea spread that ‘book learning’ might usefully supplement learning on the job, even education came to be organised along the lines of the crafts or trades. Whereas other societies, such as the United States and Japan, required specialists to acquire a general education—designed to develop and nurture skills in communication, knowledge of the social process, an understanding of organisations and of the cultural context within which they existed—in New Zealand the organisation of the handicrafts became the model for organising formal training. In short, men and women in communities such as Caversham not only translated the principles which governed the organisation of work into a social pattern and a political programme, but bequeathed a powerful but anachronistic legacy. The final irony, however, is that the key elements of the labour process on The Flat, using the knowledge of skilled workers and integrating them into management, have recently been destroyed here, although the most successful capitalist nation, Japan, has learnt the lesson.

The last word need not be so gloomy. The central cultural values which the people of Caversham forged during this period and translated into a political programme came to permeate the city and (to a lesser extent) the entire Dominion. In large measure this suggests that similar communities existed in other parts of New Zealand and that the story of Caversham’s skilled workers is in some respects typical. The attempt to achieve stable employment, material security for all, and to recreate a community in a new land reflected the on-going potency of pre-industrial beliefs. So too did the

belief in fairness and justice. These notions, profoundly embedded in the labour process of the handicraft trades, found expression in such concepts as a 'fair' wage, a 'just' or 'fair' price, and provided justification for tariffs, the exclusion of immigrants who worked too hard for too little and the remarkable growth in the Arbitration Court's jurisdiction. New technologies continually threatened the stable equilibrium of the 'social laboratory' but never created an unsurmountable challenge. Skilled men (but rarely women) organised their work, the division of labour itself, to contain and control change. We sorely miss the ease with which they confidently translated their faiths into social, economic and political practice, but the faiths survive even if many of their translations no longer work. We may have lost their world, and the world of Caversham was not merely New Zealand writ small, but we are as we find ourselves because that world once existed.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See J. Rule, 'The Property of Skill in the Period of Manufacture' and K. McLelland, 'Time to Work, Time to Live: Some Aspects of Work and the Re-formation of Class in Britain, 1850–1880', both in Patrick Joyce (ed.), *The Historical Meanings of Work*, New York, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce, *Visions*, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> For gifts, see transcripts of interviews with Robert Rutherford, recalling his grandfather's practice, p. 4, and Robert Murray, p. 5. For credit, see transcripts of interviews with William Rutherford, p. 9, and Miss Shiel, pp. 9–10, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Penn, *Skilled Workers in the Class Structure*, p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> Minute for 16 September, *Rise and Progress of the Loyal Caversham Lodge*, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> A. Lynch, 'Otago 17 – Southland 10: A Social History of Rugby in the 1940s', research thesis, OU, 1984, p. 19 and Duder, 'Hegemony or Resistance', p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> All the interviews about growing up in Caversham reveal the importance of kinship.

<sup>8</sup> Olssen, *Red Feds*, ch. 3 discusses the pre-war ideological context and Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, traces the

wartime situation at the national level. The best discussion of the war's complex impact on gender relations is Jill Roe's essay, 'Chivalry and Social Policy in the Antipodes', *Historical Studies*, v. 22 (April 1987), pp. 395–410, especially 400–1.

[9](#) The quotation is from Joyce, *Visions*, p. 5.

[10](#) Wally Seccombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social History*, v. 2 (Jan. 1986), p. 57. It should be said that many husbands handed over their pay to their wives, reserving only a little for expenses. In this sense perhaps they paid their wives, but it was at their discretion and no law regulated the transaction.

[11](#) Transcript of interview with Bert Grimmett, pp. 8–9.

[12](#) In writing this I am uncomfortably aware that the task of reconciling such a statement with the continuing enthusiasm for the monarchy and the Honours system has not been begun. The latter may have seemed democratic here, for men like Barron and Sidey had modest origins, but enthusiasm for the monarchy poses a paradox.

[13](#) Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, p. 18. Similarly, C. W. Shiel inspected every brick for his mansion; interview with Miss Shiel, p. 11.

[14](#) ASC&J Minutes, 15 Aug. 1913. On 17 April 1914 they heard Arthur Witty of the Land Values League with equal enthusiasm.

[15](#) No footnote should be needed for Cavanagh but sceptics should consult Sean O'Hagan, *The Pride of Southern Rebels: The History of Otago Rugby*, Dunedin, 1981, pp. 86–88. For Mercer, see the photograph of the Otago team of 1922 in Arthur C. Swan, *History of New Zealand Rugby Football 1870–1945*, Wellington, 1948, n.p [p. 352ff.] and RR, 19 Oct. 1923, p. 483.

[16](#) Cartwright, 'Diary', 16 Jan. 1908 and Lyons, 'Reminiscences', p. 35. For Baeyertz see Greg Baughen, 'C.N. Baeyertz and *The Triad*, 1893–1915', research thesis, OU, 1980.

[17](#) Joyce, *Visions*, p. 287.

[18](#) Sidey spoke to the Loyal Caversham Lodge on 20 April 1898, *Rise and Progress*, p. 22 and for Tavemer, ASC&J, Minutes, 12 Dec. 1913.

[19](#) Clarke, 'The Voyage to Otago, 1870s', pp. 101–3 and 'Earlier Days of Odd Fellowship in Dunedin', p. 3.

[20](#) *Otago Witness*, 20 April 1910 and Olssen, 'New Zealand and the

War', unpublished paper given at the Anzac Muster, Monash University, 1990.

[21](#) 'The Bad Old Times', in *Musings in Maoriland*, pp. 219–21.

[22](#) *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, p. vi. I am indebted to John Martin for this point.

[23](#) Transcripts of interviews with William Rutherford, p. 5 (for the quotation); Bert Grimmett, pp. 5–6, 13–14; Leslie Colbert, pp. 14–15; Robert Murray, pp. 4–5; and Ruby Lyons, 'Reminiscences', pp. 20–21, 45. P. J. Gibbons wrongly assumes that the values of 'the gentry, the urban bourgeoisie, and the lower middle class' achieved hegemony; see 'The Climate of Opinion', in Oliver & Williams (eds), *Oxford History of New Zealand*, pp. 302–3.

[24](#) *Triad*, 1 Sept. 1908, p. 17.

[25](#) Interview with Robert Rutherford, p. 7.

[26](#) The definition is from *RR*, 20 Oct. 1922, p. 493.

[27](#) Some labour leaders thought 'the singular lack of ambition among working-class parents' a major problem; ed. *Weekly Herald*, 6 Aug. 1910, p. 4. For the McIndoes, see Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, pp. 14–15. John McIndoe did his apprenticeship as a printer and Archibald McIndoe became a doctor and a pioneer of plastic surgery.

[28](#) For instance see Bartlett, 'Woven Together', pp. 75, 146–8.

[29](#) Jo Ward, 'For Reasons of their Own: A Study of the Otago Employers' Association, 1901–15', research thesis, OU, 1984, ch. 2.

[30](#) W. B. Sutch, *Price Fixing in New Zealand*, New York, 1932.

[31](#) I have analysed the intellectual origins of that idea more fully in 'W. T. Mills, E. J. B. Allen, J. A. Lee and Socialism in New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 10 (Oct. 1976), pp. 112–29.

[32](#) *Stone's Directory* provides the basic information. See also transcripts of interviews with Robert Murray, p. 3 (tennis ballboy) and Bert Grimmett, p. 3 (his father helped his sisters set up as hairdressers). For McIndoe, see Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, p. 24.

[33](#) Transcript of interview with him by Melissa Reid, p. 9.

[34](#) Only C. N. Ingram, the child of a strongly pro-Labour family, used such terms, but he thought of himself as 'lower working class' although his father was a master asphalter and then self-employed.

[35](#) 'Diary', [Jan.–March] 1908. See too Julie Hynes, 'The Solo Women of Caversham: Unloved, Unknown and Unequal', 452 class essay, OU,

1980 and Mosley, *Faces in the Fire*, p. 25 (the thesis has not survived).

[36](#) The *Census* stopped measuring the extent of illiteracy in 1902 because it had clearly become a shrinking problem confined to an ageing cohort. There is fragmentary evidence, including the minutes of the Labourers' Union, to suggest that even on the eve of war many unskilled men had difficulty writing grammatically.

[37](#) Quoted by Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens*, London, 1991, p. 572. See *Red Feds*, pp. 59–62, for a more detailed profile.

[38](#) Donald Akenson, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand, 1860–1950*, Wellington, 1990, ch. 1, disputes the popular view that the Irish Catholics were concentrated in the ranks of the unskilled. See also P. J. O'Farrell, *Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia and New Zealand*, Sydney, 1990 and Richard Davis, *Irish Issues in New Zealand Politics, 1868–1922*, Dunedin, 1974.

[39](#) Penn, *Skilled Workers*, p. 43 and ch. 5.

[40](#) For the fullest discussion, N. B. Dearle, *Industrial Training*, London, 1914, pp. 20–27.

[41](#) *Apprenticeship Question (New Zealand), 1923. Precis of Proceedings at a Conference of Representatives of Employers, Workers, the Education Department, and the Department of Labour ... 2nd May 1923 .... Report of Committee Appointed by the Conferences .... Precis of Proceedings at a Further Conference held on 15th August, 1923. Copy of Apprentices Act ...*, Wellington, 1923, pp. 11, 16–18. For further discussion see John E. Martin, *The Department of Labour*, forthcoming.

[42](#) Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, pp. 429–34, points out that the United States Census classification of occupations, which shaped that used in New Zealand, classified all farm-related work and work involving animals as unskilled.

[43](#) For the games and shows, interview with C. W. N. Ingram, p. 19; for the cattle, interview with Leslie Colbert, p.8; and for the ubiquity of horses until the end of the period, interview with William A. Campbell, pp. 3, 5–6.

[44](#) Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, p. 42.

[45](#) ‘Social Mobility in Caversham, 1901–1922’, Caversham Project working paper, 1988.

[46](#) In the private sector a small Metal Workers' Assistants' Union existed early in the century, indicating the some men recognised that they had

distinctive interests, although in 1906 they (unsuccessfully) asked to join the Labourers; Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, pp. 12–13.

[47](#) ‘Diary’, 14 Jan. 1908 and Max Herz, *New Zealand; the Country and the People*, London, 1912, p. 376.

[48](#) John Child, ‘Wages Policy and Wages Movements ...’, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, v. 13 (1971), pp. 164–76 and Gait, ‘Wealth and Income’, pp. 223–5 and Table 15.11, p. 223.

[49](#) Holt, *Arbitration*, pp. 102–5, 158–9; Gait, ‘Wealth and Income’, chs 15 and 16; G. W. Clinkard, ‘Wages and Working Hours in New Zealand, 1897–1919’, *New Zealand Official Yearbook*, Wellington, 1919, pp. 917–34; and the Minister of Labour’s speech to the Conference on Apprenticeship, *Apprenticeship Question*, p. 4.

[50](#) Scaffolders, men working with concrete, masons’ labourers, bricklayers’ labourers, hod carriers and stone sawers; Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, pp. 63–64.

[51](#) *Awards*, v. 9 (1908), p. 8.

[52](#) Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, p. 54 and Gait, ‘Wealth and Income’, p. 229.

[53](#) ‘Table Showing the Number of People Employed in Factories, Etc.’, *AJHR*, 1911, H–11, pp. 42–56 (for Dunedin City).

[54](#) Galt, ‘Wealth and Income’, pp. 219–21.

[55](#) Theodore Caplow, *The Sociology of Work*, Minneapolis, 1954, pp. 41–43, points out that this assumption bedevils analysis of social status.

[56](#) I am grateful to Dr Paul Roth for this information. Some cases were brought before 1873 but after that only infrequently. The last occurred in 1888.

[57](#) See Brooking’s summary of essays on the Protestant churches, ‘Confessions’, pp. 55–59, and Elizabeth Sinclair, ‘The Catholics of Caversham 1890–1920’, 452 class essay, OU, 1982, Tables 6 and 7.

[58](#) Hugh Jackson, ‘Churchgoing in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 17 (May 1983), pp. 43–59.

[59](#) Cartwright, ‘Diary’, 17 and [31] Jan. 1908; transcript of interview with Miss Bolton, p. 9; and for the term ‘matchy tarts’ transcript of interview with Robert Murray, p. 7. Elvin Hatch, *Respectable Lives: Social Standing in Rural New Zealand*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992, provides the best analysis of refinement.

[60](#) Hugh Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand, 1860–1930*, Wellington, 1987, pp. 77–82, 85, 167–8.

[61](#) See Crossick, ‘The Labour Aristocracy and its Values: A Study of Mid-Victorian Kentish London’, *Victorian Studies*, v. 19 (March 1976), pp. 301–28; R. Q. Gray, *Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*, pp. 5–7, 138–43; T. R. Tholfsen, *Working-Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England*, London, 1976; and Neville Kirk, *The Growth of Working Class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England*, Beckenham, 1985, ch. 5.

[62](#) V. 4, p. iii. See also Ernest Gellner, *Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History*, London, 1991, pp. 104–12, 211–13, 263 (I am indebted to Brian Moloughney for this reference) and C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford, 1962.

[63](#) It needs to be borne in mind that in most European societies the state fixed by law the number of masters allowed in each craft; see, for instance, Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, New York, 1985, pp. 79–82.

[64](#) Gellner, *Plough, Sword and Book*, p. 212.

[65](#) For the previous two paragraphs see ‘ASRS 1921 Conference Interview with General Manager ...’, bound in RR, 11 Feb. 1921, pp. 8, 9–11; ASRS *Biennial Conference, 1923...*, Wellington, 1923, p. 22; and ASC&J Minutes, *passim*. I am grateful to Shaun Ryan for information about the Engineers’ Union; and for the Provident Fund, see Justin Strang, ‘Welfare in Transition: Reform’s Income Support Policy, 1912–1928’, MA thesis, VUW, 1992, pp. 148–72.

[66](#) The interview with Miss Shiel suggests that they were sent away less to escape the influences of the area, for they were permitted to play around the brickworks, than that of their ‘wild’ cousins.

[67](#) *Mateship in Local Organisation: A Study of Egalitarianism, Stratification, Leadership, and Amenities Projects in a Semi-industrial Community of Inland New South Wales*, 2nd ed., St Lucia, 1978, pp. 46–55.

[68](#) Hatch, *Respectable Lives*, pp. 159–79, found similar patterns when he studied a fanning community in South Canterbury in the 1970s and 1980s.

[69](#) O’Hagan, *Pride of Southern Rebels*, pp. 94–95.

[70](#) Gellner, *Sword, Plough and Book*, p. 263.

[71](#) Transcripts of interviews with William A. Campbell, pp. 13–14;

Robert Rutherford, p. 8; C. N. Ingram, p. 9; Bert Grimmett, p. 26; Robert Murray, p. 6; and William Rutherford, p. 7 (see the last two especially for 'Stringy' Wilson). See also Ruby Lyons, 'Reminiscences', pp. 22–28.

[72](#) OW, 7 Dec. 1895, pp. 6, 8; 15 Feb. and 22 Feb. 1896, p. 6 (for both).

[73](#) Conversation with Keith Harrison, Oct. 1992. To make matters worse, he had only recently persuaded his son to join Methvens.

[74](#) Transcript of interview with Miss Shiel, p. 18.

[75](#) *Ibid.*

[76](#) Transcripts of interviews with C. N. Ingram, pp. 6, 21 and Robert Murray, p. 10 (he called it the Forbury gang but kept shutters on his windows, like most people who lived on David Street, to avoid having his windows broken regularly).

[77](#) James Jackson to Sidey, 1 Oct. 1917, Sidey MSS, 605/20.

[78](#) Transcripts of interviews with Leslie Colbert, p. 21; C. N. Ingram, p. 5; Robert Murray, p. 8; Robert Rutherford, pp. 7–8; William Rutherford, p. 14; Bert Grimmett, pp. 5–6, 14; G. Shiel, p. 11; and Miss C. Shiel, pp. 17–19.

[79](#) 'Diary', Jan.–March 1908. Hatch, *Respectable Lives*, pp. 167–70, discusses New Zealand perceptions of England and Scotland.

[80](#) *Mateship*, p. 212.

[81](#) See for instance Robert Chapman, 'Fiction and the Social Pattern', *Landfall*, v. 7, 1 (1953), pp. 26–58 and J. O. C. Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male—A History*, Auckland, 1987.

[82](#) This may have created a growing link between families and particular jobs; see Stearns, *Labour Lives*, pp. 115–17. For an analysis of the romantic view of mateship, see Annabel Cooper, 'Textual Territories: Gendered Cultural Politics and Australian Representations of the War of 1914–1918', *Australian Historical Studies*, v. 25 (April 1993), pp. 403–21 and 'Gate Crashing Public Space/Longing and Masculine Romance', *New Zealand Journal of Literature*, forthcoming. On the lodges see the provocative analysis by Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, New Haven, 1989.

[83](#) ODT, 22 May 1925, p. 6 and 23 May 1925, p. 17.

[84](#) Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* and Gellner, *Plough, Sword, and Book*, p. 245.

[85](#) See Arthur Stinchcombe, *Creating Efficient Industrial*

*Administrations*, New York, 1974 and Barrington Moore Jr, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt*, New York, 1978, pp. 257–74.

[86](#) James Cronin, *Industrial Conflict in Modern Britain*, London, 1979, first argued that success helped explain why industrial conflict occurred in waves.

[87](#) Cited by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, pp. xlv–xlvii. For the relevant British background see Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp. 139–64.

[88](#) It should be remembered that a less truculent form of industrial unionism had been preached by the Knights of Labour, Lister's *Otago Workman*, and the United Labour Party (1911–13).

[89](#) OW, 7 Jan. 1893, p. 1 and 10 June 1893, p. 1.

[90](#) *Rise and Progress of the Loyal Caversham Lodge*, pp. 15–24, 27.

[91](#) I have dealt more fully with this in *Otago*, pp. 113–18, 122. For Sullivan's resignation see *RR*, 19 Oct. 1923, p. 473 and 14 Dec. 1923, p. 578.

[92](#) In P. Munz (ed.), *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, 1969; 'Social Policy in the Liberal Period', *NZJH*, v. 13 (April 1979), pp. 25–33; and '100 Years of the Welfare State?', in David Green (ed.), *Towards 1990*, Wellington, 1989, pp. 82–90.

[93](#) McIvor, *The Rainmaker: A Biography of John Ballance*, Auckland, 1989. Hamer justified omitting labour legislation on the grounds that it had been fully dealt with by Keith Sinclair, *William Pember Reeves: New Zealand Fabian*, Oxford, 1965 and James Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand: The First Forty Years*, Auckland, 1986, chs 1–3.

[94](#) Galt, 'Wealth and Income', demonstrates the accuracy of Oliver's insight but points out that inequalities still existed. Jim McAloon, 'Colonial Wealth: The Rich in Canterbury and Otago 1890–1914', Ph.D thesis, OU, 1993, provides a valuable analysis of the wealthy and their world.

[95](#) Broadly speaking, I would argue, they were right; see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 2 vols, New York, 1978.

[96](#) *The Working Class and Welfare: Reflections on the Political Development of the Welfare State in Australia and New Zealand, 1890–1980*, Wellington and Sydney, 1985 and Strang, 'Welfare in Transition'.

[97](#) Penn, *Skilled Workers and the Class Structure*, p. 129.

[98](#) Bartlett, 'Woven Together', pp. 103, 131–2 also notes that women did

not question, let alone object to this structure of inequality; it seemed natural.

[99](#) See for a fuller discussion my essay on ‘The New Zealand Labour Movement and Race’, forthcoming.

[100](#) A point made by Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?’, *Economic History Review*, v. 37 (1984), pp. 355–72.

[101](#) Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Trade Union History’, *Economic History Review*, v. 20 (1967), pp. 362–3.

[102](#) Sutch later argued that New Zealand missed the opportunity to become an industrial nation in the 1890s; see his *Colony or Nation? Economic Crises in New Zealand from the 1860s to the 1960s*, Sydney, 1966, Part 1. Few have been persuaded.

[103](#) *Labour and Politics*, Wellington, [1920?]. I have discussed Allen’s views more fully in ‘W. T. Mills, E. J. B. Allen, J. A. Lee and Socialism in New Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 10 (Oct. 1976), pp. 112–29.

[104](#) Olssen and Len Richardson, ‘The New Zealand Labour Movement, 1880–1920’, in Eric Fry (ed.), *Common Cause: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Labour History*, Wellington and Sydney, 1986, pp. 7–15.

[105](#) Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, ch. 3 (and especially pp. 99–100) points out the link between low rates of geographic and social mobility, loss of control of the labour process, high levels of dependence, and the strength of paternalistic and authoritarian power relationships both at work and in the community.

# Notes

## ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR	<i>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</i>
NZJH	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
ODT	<i>Otago Daily Times</i>
OW	<i>Otago Workman and Forbury News</i>
PD	<i>Parliamentary Debates</i>
RR	<i>New Zealand Railway Review</i>

## 1: INTRODUCTION

1 Reeves started the process in *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, 2 vols, London, 1902, v. 2, ch. 1. Many visitors came to see and report over the next fifteen years and more recently Keith Sinclair, *William Pember Reeves: New Zealand Fabian*, Oxford, 1965 and James Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration: The First Forty Years*, Auckland, 1987, have written analyses. For visitors and commentators from North America, see Peter Coleman, *Progressivism and the World of Reform: New Zealand and the Origins of the American Welfare State*, Lawrence, Kansas, 1987. The origin of the phrase ‘social laboratory’ remains unclear. Sinclair, Reeves, p. 212 implies that Earl Asquith first referred to New Zealand as ‘a laboratory...’.

2 Subtitled *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism in New Zealand, 1908–1914*, Auckland, 1988.

3 The debate began with W. H. Oliver’s review of Sinclair’s biography of *William Pember Reeves*, entitled ‘Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern’, in Peter Munz (ed.), *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, 1969. Further contributions came from Olssen, ‘The “Working Class” in New Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 8 (May 1974),

pp. 44–60 and ‘Social Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand’, in David Pitt (ed.), *Social Class in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1977, pp. 22–41; Miles Fairburn, ‘Social Mobility and Opportunity in Nineteenth Century Zealand’, *NZJH*, v. 13 (May 1979), pp. 43–64; and Christopher Campbell, ‘The “Working Class” and the Liberal Party in 1890’, *NZJH*, v. 9 (May 1975), pp. 41–51. Oliver responded to Olssen, and Olssen to Campbell in the Oct. issues of 1974 and 1975, pp. 182–3 and 200–1 respectively.

4 These trends had been well identified since the 1950s thanks to several fine theses which are referred to in my essay on ‘The Origins of the Labour Party: A Reconsideration’, *NZJH*, v. 21 (April 1987), pp. 79–96.

5 Some successful businessmen created a further problem by continuing to list themselves under their craft skill. This happened even with so-called unskilled occupations where, for instance, a mine manager preferred to be listed as a miner.

6 These ideas have received a preliminary investigation in two articles which I co-authored with Judi Boyd and Jeremy Brecher respectively: ‘The Skilled Workers: Journeymen and Masters in Caversham, 1880–1914’, *NZJH*, v. 22 (Oct. 1988), pp. 118–33 and ‘New Zealand and United States Labour Movements: The View from the Workshop Floor’, in Jock Phillips (ed.), *New Worlds? The Comparative History of New Zealand and the United States*, Wellington, 1989, pp. 96–112.

7 The concept of the ‘industrial revolution’ has been much modified of late, largely to rid it of its uniform and evolutionary character, but it is still useful; see David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge, 1969.

8 Richard Price, “‘What’s in a Name?’ Work-place History and “Rank and Filism””, *International Review of Social History*, v. xxiv (1989), pp. 63–64.

9 In *The Red Feds*, and especially Pt II, and ‘The Origins of the Labour Party ...’, *NZJH*, v. 22 (April 1988), pp. 79–96.

10 See Henry Broadhead, *State Regulation of Labour and Labour Disputes in New Zealand: A Description and a Criticism*, Christchurch, 1908, pp. 165–71.

11 The best studies of ‘scientific management’ are by Daniel Nelson, especially *Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in*

*the United States*, Madison, 1975.

12 There are several important studies, but Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York and London, 1974, is a seminal Marxist analysis. See also Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1979; Andrew Zimbalist (ed.), *Case Studies in the Labor Process*, New York, 1979; Richard Price, 'The Labour Process and Labour History', *Social History*, v. 8 (Jan. 1983), pp. 57–75 and the subsequent debate between Price and Patrick Joyce in *Social History*, v. 9 (Jan. 1984), pp. 67–76 and v. 9 (May 1984), pp. 217–31; Paul Edwards, *Conflict at Work: A Materialist Analysis of Workplace Relations*, Oxford, 1986; and Craig Littler, *The Development of the Labour Process in Capitalist Societies: A Comparative Study of the Transformation of Work Organization in Britain, Japan and the USA*, Aldershot, 1986.

13 See, for instance, William Lazonick's criticism of Braverman in 'Technological Change and the Control of Work: The Development of Capital–Labour Relations in US Manufacturing Industries', in Howard Gospel & Craig Littler (eds), *Managerial Strategies and industrial Relations*, London, 1983.

14 Raphael Samuel, 'The Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, v. 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 6–72, first called the latter assumptions into question.

15 Richard Price, *Labour in British Society: An Interpretive History*, London, 1987, p. 4.

16 Olssen, 'The Labour Movement and Race in New Zealand', unpublished paper to a Conference on Labour-market Segmentation and Race, Institute of International Social History, Amsterdam, 1990.

17 Anthony Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 219–21.

18 *Islands of History*, Chicago and London, 1985, p. vii.

19 *Competitive Advantage on the Shop Floor*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990. I am grateful to Dr Marcel van der Linden for drawing this book to my attention.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 182–4.

23 *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, ed. and transl, by Eden and Cedar Paul, London, 1943, p. 23.

24 Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York, 1974 and John Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies: A History of Early New South Wales*, Sydney, 1983.

25 Quoted in John H. Goldthorpe *et al.*, *Social Mobility & Class Structure in Modern Britain*, Oxford, 1980, p. 9.

26 'Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism', in *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1971.

27 *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour*, London, 1964, p. 272.

28 E.g. Henry Pelling, *Popular Society and Politics in Late Victorian Britain*, London, 1968.

29 See, for example, J. M. Barbalet, 'The "Labor Aristocracy" In Context', *Science & Society*, v. 51 (Summer 1987), pp. 133–53.

30 *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, London, 1974.

31 R. Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*, Oxford, 1976 and G. Crossick, *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society*, London, 1978.

32 *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840–1914*, Cambridge, 1991, p. 57.

33 R. Stevens, 'Towards a Class Analysis of New Zealand', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, v. 14 (June 1978), pp. 113–29.

34 See the fascinating article by John Child, who set out to see whether World War I had accomplished the same dramatic reduction in the skilled–unskilled differential as it had in Britain, only to conclude that scarcely any differential ever existed; 'Wages Policy and Wages Movements in New Zealand, 1914–1923', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, v. 13 (1971), pp. 164–76.

35 David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles*, London and New York, 1979, and Peter Stearns, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labour: A Cause Without Rebels*, New Brunswick, NJ, [1971].

36 Roger Penn, *Skilled Workers in the Class Structure*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 129.

37 *Skill and the English Working Class, 1870–1914*, London, 1980, ch. 7.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 15 (quoting H. Renold).

39 For recent work which calls in question the typicality of textiles and demonstrates the remarkable diversity of work experiences, even in industrial Britain, see Raphael Samuel, 'The Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, v. 3 (Spring 1977), and Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England*, London, 1980.

40 For Britain see R. H. Tawney, 'The Economics of Boy Labour', *Economic Journal*, v. 19 (Dec. 1909), pp. 517–37; R. A. Bray, *Boy Labour and Apprenticeship*, London, 1911; J. A. Hobson, *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, London, 1896, p. 255; Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, London, 1902, pp. 463–73. The thesis was given a new lease of life by Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism*.

41 *Skill and the English Working Class*, pp. 46–50. More also points out that much of the evidence for a dramatic decline came from London, an atypical city. See also O. J. Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, London, 1912, p. 161 for the 'old' system.

42 More, *Skill and the English Working Class*, p. 182.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43 and ch. 5.

44 Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage*, p. 6.

45 N. B. Dearle, *Industrial Training*, London, 1914, pp. 20–27.

46 The most sensitive exploration of the Industrial Revolution's impact on the English language remains Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950*, London, 1958.

47 Marxists have continued to try to salvage the central insights. For an incisive critique see Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, Cambridge, 1979. It should be noted that, when analysing contemporary politics, Marx often noted the importance of intermediate classes and the role of social mobility in preventing class formation; see Goldthorpe, *Social Mobility & Class Structure in Modern Britain*, pp. 4–9.

48 An interesting point made by David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, 'Social History and its Discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language', *Social History*, v. 17 (May 1992), pp. 165–88. Some contemporary attempts to salvage Marxist theory retain a materialist bias (i.e. the economic determines the social etc.) but incorporate into their definition of class a political test; e.g. N. Poulantzas, *Political Power and*

*Social Classes*, London, 1973 and *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, London, 1975; Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and State*, London, 1978, and *The Debate on Classes*, London, 1989.

49 This is what I took J. P. Sartre to mean in *La Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Paris, 1960, and especially in his lengthy introduction, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel Barnes, New York, 1963.

50 Norman Wiley, 'America's Unique Class Politics: The Interplay of the Labor, Credit and Commodity Markets', *American Sociological Review*, v. 32 (1967), pp. 529–41.

51 Weber, *Economy and Society*, G. Roth and C. Wittich (eds), New York, 1968.

52 For instance, Pitrim Sorokin, *Social Mobility*, New York, 1927 and Goldthorpe, *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain*, Oxford, 1980. There is also an extensive American historiography on social mobility; see Stefan Themstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis 1880–1970*, Cambridge, Mass., 1973, and Clyde and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Nineteenth Century Poughkeepsie*, Cambridge, Mass., 1978.

53 See Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx*, New York, 1952.

54 F. Parkin, *Class, Inequality and Political Order*, London, 1971, (ed.), *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*, London, 1974, and *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*; Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, London, 1973, and *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge, 1984.

55 This tradition derives from Max Weber; see S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix (eds), *Class, Status and Power*, London, 1954; J. A. Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, Toronto, 1964. See also Mary and Robert Jackman, 'An Interpretation of the Relation Between Objective and Subjective Social Status', *American Sociological Review*, v. 38 (1973), pp. 569–82.

56 I have been inclined to this view myself; see 'The "Working Class" in New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 8 (April 1974), pp. 44–60.

57 It is appropriate to cite here a work which illustrates the point and deeply influenced me; R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset (eds), *Class, Status and Power*, 2nd ed., London, 1967.

58 'Strategies of Social Closure in Class Formation', in Parkin (ed.), *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*, p. 1.

59 A point made with particular eloquence by Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, New York, 1978, Appendix II, pp. 225–63 (trans, from the 1939 German ed. by Edmund Jephcott).

60 'An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification', in Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, Glencoe, Ill., 1949, p. 71. The best recent use of this method is Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, New York, 1973.

61 See Bernard Barber, *Social Stratification: A Comparative Analysis of Structure and Process*, New York, 1957, pp. 100–11.

62 'Towards a Theory of Social Stratification', in Parkin (ed.), *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*, pp. 55–101.

63 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York, 1963, p. 11.

64 I have looked at this problem from the perspective of American history in 'The Case of the Socialist Party that Failed, or Further Reflections on an American Dream', *Labor History*, v. 29 (Fall 1988), pp. 416–49.

65 Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York, 1988, p. 79. Scott has further developed her critique in 'The Evidence of Experience', *Critical Inquiry*, v. 17 (Summer 1991), pp. 773–97.

66 Mary and Robert Jackman, *Class Awareness in the United States*, Berkeley, 1983, p. 164, argue that an autonomous model is appropriate for husbands but that a familial one is appropriate for working wives. For the opposite view see Ida Harper Simpson, David Stark and Robert A. Jackson, 'Class Identification Processes of Married Working Men and Women', *American Sociological Review*, v. 53 (April 1988), pp. 284–93.

67 'Working-class Culture and Working-class Politics in London, 1870–1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', *Journal of Social History*, v. 7 (Summer 1974), pp. 460–508.

68 Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832–1982*, New York, 1983, p. 102. For a useful study of the 'linguistic turn', see Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History*, Berkeley and London, 1989.

69 Jones, *Languages of Class*, p. 21.

70 Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 57.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

72 Jones, *Languages of Class*, p. 19.

73 A point made by Mayfield and Thorne, 'Social History and its Discontents ...'. In response to an attack on their argument, which I found unpersuasive, they have made this point more clearly; see Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, 'The Poverty of Protest: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language—A Reply', *Social History*, v. 18 (Jan. 1993), pp. 1–15, and Mayfield and Thorne, 'Reply to "The Poverty of Protest" ...', *ibid.*, v. 18 (May 1993), pp. 219–33.

74 *Visions of the People*, p. 28. He ignores the best study of the subject, which calls in question his tendency to equate 'populism' and 'radicalism'; Michael Roe, *Kenealy and the Tichborne Case: A Study in Mid-Victorian Populism*, Melbourne, 1974, ch. 7.

75 Mayfield and Thorne, 'Social History and its Discontents ...', p. 169. Joyce robustly responds in *Social History*, v. 18 (Jan. 1993), pp. 81–85; and Mayfield and Thorne reply (and have the better of the exchange) in *ibid.*, v. 18 (May 1993), pp. 222–4.

76 Mayfield and Thorne, 'Social History and its Discontents...'. p. 187 (citing Paul de Man, 'The rhetoric of temporality').

77 *Islands of History*, p. 149.

78 I first explored this briefly in 'Social Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand', in David Pitt (ed.), *Social Class in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1977. On pre-industrial societies see Michael Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975, pp. 24, 29, 43, and Joan Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, New York, 1978, pp. 16–21. Katz has defined pre-industrial in terms of transience, newness, 'the intermingling of its population, the small scale of its enterprise, the high degree of self-employment, and the continued unity of work and residence'; see *The People of Hamilton*, p. 24. He also noted that pre-industrial society was characterised by a high level of overlap between social, economic and political power (p. 29). Rulers, owners and rich were, by and large, the same people (p. 43). The sense of a warm and cohesive community is contradicted, however, by transience and rigid structures of inequality.

79 Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures: Industry, Innovation and*

*Work in Britain, 1700–1820*, London, 1985, chs 2 and 3.

80 *Ibid.*, pp. 174–5.

## 2: FROM ROAD BOARD TO SUBURB

1 Moshe Semyonov, ‘Bi-ethnic Labor Markets, Mono-ethnic Labor Markets, and Socioeconomic Inequality’, *American Sociological Review*, v. 53 (April 1988), p. 256.

2 British historians of labour have begun to recognise the importance of local communities in complicating what were once thought of as the unvarying social relations of capitalism; see Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, 3 vols, Oxford, 1986; and Joyce, *Visions*, ch. 12.

3 Alma Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town: Historic Caversham as Seen Through its Streets and Buildings*, Dunedin, 1978, p. 5.

4 K. C. McDonald, *City of Dunedin: A Century of Civic Enterprise*, Dunedin, 1968, p. 138.

5 Reed, *Place Names of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1975, p. 92 and, for the prominent early settlers, Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, pp. 22–23.

6 Olssen, *A History of Otago*, Dunedin, 1984, pp. 37–38 and Fr. P. E. Mee, *The Turn of the Tide: A “Historette” to the Establishment of St. Bernadette’s Parish, Forbury, Dunedin*, [Dunedin, 1977], pp. 5–7.

7 *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand: Industrial, Descriptive, Historical, Biographical ...*, v. 4, *Otago and Southland Provincial Districts*, Christchurch, 1905, pp. 148–50 (all future references are to v. 4); Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, pp. 15–17; Olssen, *Otago*, pp. 85, 87–88; P. T. Verstappen, ‘The Benevolent Institution and the Provision of Charitable Aid in Otago, 1890–1920’, 452 class essay, University of Otago (hereafter OU), 1979 (all 452 essays cited are held by the Hocken Library); and for the national system, Margaret Tennant, *Paupers and Providers: Charitable Aid in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1989.

8 G. Stedman, ‘The South Dunedin Flat: A Study in Urbanisation, 1849–1965’, MA thesis, OU, 1966, pp. 89–90.

9 McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 139–40. Stedman, *ibid.*, pp. 76–77 discusses the Caversham Road Board’s attempt to govern its large domain.

10 McDonald, *Dunedin*, p. 139. To avoid confusion Caversham will

refer to the borough and, after 1905, the suburb, while Caversham township will be used to refer to that part of the borough centred on Caversham Valley.

11 Tom Brooking, 'Confessions of a Caversham Conspirator: A Report on the State of the Caversham Project', 1982, pp. 32, 57. One resident, born there in 1894, claimed that ethnic tension existed but took the form of English Caversham versus Scottish Dunedin. He thought this underlay the amalgamation debate; see transcript of interview by Helen Brownlie with Frederick George Edison Bell, 1980, part 2, p. 4, OU History Department (all transcripts are held by the History Department).

12 Stedman, 'The Flat', pp. 81–82.

13 It ran out of clay and shut down in 1889; see Rob Calder, "The Bastion of Brickmakers": The Caversham Brick and Pipemaking Industries 1884–1924', 452 class essay, OU, 1982, p. 9. See also E. M. Seed, 'The History of the Brick, Tile, and Pottery Industries in Otago', MA thesis, OU, 1954, pp. 85–101.

14 *Cyclopaedia*, p. 355.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 362 and Kathryn G. Lucas, *A New Twist: A Centennial History of Donaghys Industries Limited*, Dunedin, 1979, pp. 15–16.

16 McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 144–5. Caversham contracted with Hutchison to supply the borough's gas but the debate over whether to join his or Dunedin's gas scheme almost reduced neighbouring South Dunedin to civil war.

17 In order to find space for a foundry they moved the factory to Crawford Street, where several other large foundries were established, but moved back on to The Flat in 1909; *Cyclopaedia*, p. 324 and G. Methven & Co Ltd, *Prospectus*, Dunedin 1930, p. 7. Unless otherwise indicated information about people, firms and addresses is from *Stone's Directory*.

18 *Cyclopaedia*, p. 410 and Tony Bamford, 'The Wax Vesta Match Factory', 452 class essay, OU, 1982, pp. 4–6.

19 Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 41 and transcript of an interview between Susan Harkness and C.W. N. Ingram, 1980, part 1, pp. 2–3, History Department, OU. Ingram sold the drink factory in 1914 and became an agent for theatrical companies.

20 Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 47 and Ruby Lyons (née Bathgate), 'Reminiscences', p. 34 (I am grateful to George Griffiths for lending me

this document).

21 Transcript of Harkness interview with Ingram, part 3, pp. 24–25 for the township and Lyons, ‘Reminiscences’, p. 31 for McCracken. M. Henderson, ‘The Pubs and Breweries of Caversham’, 452 class essay, OU, 1981, traced all hotelkeepers through the *Directory*.

22 Lucy Duncan, ‘Hillside Railway Workshops, 1875–1920’, 452 class essay, OU, 1982 and above, p. 124–5.

23 Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, pp. [32–33].

24 *Typo*, 31 May 1890, p. 56.

25 For Dunedin’s epidemics see McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 169, 174, 194.

26 For the densities see *ibid.*, p. 247. The contrast is exaggerated by virtue of the number of farms and market gardens in Caversham borough.

27 For Thorn, see Harkness interview with Ingram, part 2, p. 24 and for Hewton, see Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, p. 27.

28 *Census*, 1901, pp. 22–23; Stedman, ‘The Flat’, pp. 124–50; and W. A. V. Clark, ‘Dunedin in 1901’, MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1961, pp. 94–95. Clark distinguished different residential areas in Dunedin on the basis of population density, the value of housing, the size of houses, the materials used to make the houses, access to amenities, and the occupation of inhabitants.

29 Interview with Ingram, part 2, p. 27.

30 *Directory*, 1900, p. 274 and transcript of my interview with Robert Rutherford, 17 July 1980, p. 4. Mr Cardno was a seaman and sail-maker. *Stone’s Directory*, interestingly, listed only Mrs Mary Simpson as a registered midwife.

31 *New Zealand Scenery and Public Buildings*, Dunedin, 1895, p. 57 waxed lyrical over St Clair’s ‘bizarre villas, its noted gardens,’ and provided detailed descriptions of the more notable. For the quotation see Clark, ‘Dunedin in 1901’, p. 93.

32 *Illustrated New Zealand News*, 9 Sept., 1883, p. 7.

33 It actually closed after one month but others followed: Knewstubs Theatres, *Theatres, Cinemas: Dunedin and Districts, 1897–1974*, Dunedin, 1974, pp. 14–15.

34 Transcript of an interview between Adair Bruorton and Miss G. J. Shiel, 29 May 1980, p. 21 (Miss Shiel then lived on Josephine Street).

35 Transcript of Harkness interview with Ingram, p. 26.

36 Clark, 'Dunedin in 1901', p. 91.

37 Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 6.

38 McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 199–202, discusses the history of this board and the St Clair esplanade in the late nineteenth century. See also p. 254.

39 Caversham Borough Incorporation Act, 1880, No. 19 (Local) authorised union by ballot, but nobody ever moved to use the provision; McDonald, *Dunedin*, pp. 192–4.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 248–9 and Gavin McLean, "'A Marriage of Convenience': The Amalgamation of Caversham with Dunedin City", 452 class essay, OU, 1980, p. 6.

41 Louise Vickerman, 'A Study of Caversham Civil Marriage Registers', 452 class essay, OU, 1981, p. 1.

42 See Olssen, 'Towards a New Society, in Geoffrey Rice, W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd ed., Wellington, 1992, pp. 272–4.

43 Judi Boyd, David Thomson and Dick Martin, 'Caversham 1902–1922: A Preliminary Statistical Survey ...', Caversham Project working paper, 1992, provides the evidence for occupational distributions.

44 See Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family, 1880–1926', in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, Auckland, 1980, pp. 159–83 and Brooking, 'Confessions', pp. 31–35.

45 Brooking, 'Confessions', pp. [36–37].

46 See *Caversham School, Sixty-fifth Anniversary Celebrations, 1861–1926*, Dunedin, [1926] and Stuart C. Scott, *The First Tree in the Forest: A History of Technical Education in Otago 1850–1991*, Invercargill, 1991, pp. 20–21, 39–41.

47 Olssen, 'Friendly Societies in New Zealand, 1840–1990', paper presented to Collôque International sur l'Histoire de la Mutualité, Paris, 1992, develops a case study of The Flat's societies in more detail. The unions were the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

48 Bamford, 'Wax Vesta Factory', p. 6. His son, Robert W. Rutherford, was a partner and became manager on his father's death in 1904.

49 J. Wyllie, *Hiram Lodge*, No. 46, *New Zealand Constitution. Centennial History, 1883–1983*, Dunedin, 1983.

50 *Rise and Progress of the Loyal Caversham Lodge*, Dunedin, 1906, pp.

23, 28; W. Goodall, 'The Oddfellows', 452 class essay, OU, 1981, Table 2, p. 14; the Minute Books and Miscellaneous records of Unity Lodge, Glasgow Street; and for the opening of the new hall, *ODT*, 9 Dec. 1907, Sidey MSS, 605/13, Hocken Library.

51 'Earlier Days of Odd Fellowship in Dunedin', IOOF Unity Lodge no. 16 MSS, IOOF, Glasgow St (probably written by M.B. Feil, an employee of Hancock's).

52 J. Wyllie, *Hiram Lodge*.

53 William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1900, pp. 480–1; I have drawn on the following booklets: *Seventy-five Years of Service: A Survey of Methodism at Kew and Caversham, 1876–1951*, Dunedin, 1951; Caversham Presbyterian Church, *Jubilee Souvenir, 1924: A Brief History of the Church ...*, Dunedin, 1924; Arthur B. Pywell, *1882–1942: The Story of St Peter's Church ...*, Dunedin, 1942; and Annette Turvey, *St. Peter the Less, St Clair, ...*, Dunedin, [197?].

54 Drake to Sidey, 11 July 1910, Sidey MSS, 605/14.

55 *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 186–7.

56 *Cyclopaedia*, p. 188.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 178; his obituary in *Otago Witness*, 1 Sept. 1931, p. 21; and David Bell, 'The Impact of Nineteenth Century Science and Biblical Criticism on Expressions of Faith and Theology, with Especial Reference to the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand', Ph.D. thesis, OU, 1992, pp. 146–8.

58 Mee, *The Turn of the Tide*, pp. 17–21, 24–33.

59 All those interviewed had to attend Sunday school although in most cases their parents never attended church.

60 *Cyclopaedia*, p. 188. The Methodists and then the Dutch Reformed Church later used this building.

61 See *ODT*, 19 March 1907, Sidey MSS, 605/3.

62 Mabel Cartwright, 'Diary', Tuesday [n.d.] March 1908. I am grateful to Yvonne Robertson for lending me this valuable document.

63 These remarks are based on several 452 class essays which are summarised in Brooking, 'Confessions...', pp. 55–59.

64 Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, p. [13].

65 *Evening Star*, 18 Dec. 1907, Sidey MSS 605/3.

66 Melville Harcourt, *A Parson in Prison*, Auckland, 1944, p. 32; W. P.

Morrell, *The Anglican Church in New Zealand*, Dunedin, 1973, p. 130; and John H. Evans, *Southern See*, Dunedin, 1968, p. 168.

67 Entries for 20 Dec. 1907, 8 and 11 Jan. 1908.

68 *Ibid.*, 14 Jan. 1908.

69 Leonard Mosley, *Faces from the Fire: The Biography of Sir Archibald McIndoe*, London, 1962, p. 15. Several of those interviewed, although not asked about drunkenness or prohibition, recalled both; see, for instance, the transcript of my interview with Mr Bert Grimmett, 24 April 1993, p. 8, History Department, OU.

70 See Olssen, *Otago*, pp. 140–6.

71 Rutherford, *Edge of the Town*, p. 30 and Lyons, ‘Reminiscences’, p. 41.

72 For the baths, McDonald, *Dunedin*, p. 174.

73 George Griffiths, ‘A History of Cricket in the South’ (kindly lent by the author). Evidence for most clubs is from the Sidey MSS and *Directory*, 1900–25.

74 Harkness interview with Ingram, p. 16, for harecoursing.

75 *Directory*, 1885, p. 324 and *The Sayings and Doings of the Caversham Debating Society*, Dunedin, 1891.

76 In return for this, Caversham was to have first claim when any branch libraries were opened in the suburbs, but the times were never propitious; McDonald, *Dunedin*, p. 285.

77 RR, 26 Aug. 1910, p. 363.

78 *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 2 July 1928, pp. 50–51 and 1 Aug. 1928, pp. 44–45. *Railway Review* also published a record of each annual general meeting; see for instance 21 Aug. 1908, p. 21 and 27 Aug. 1909, p. 281.

79 These values were profoundly shaped by the subculture of skill in England and Scotland; see D. E. G. Plowman, W. E. Minchinton and Margaret Stacey, ‘Local Social Status in England and Wales’, *Sociological Review*, v.10 (1962), pp. 161–202 and j. Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth Century London*, Folkestone, 1979.

80 Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 78–80; for the quotation from Mill’s essay see *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, v. 18, *Essays on Politics and Society*, ed. J. M. Robson, Toronto, 1977, p. 122; and for the concluding thought, Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: The culture of the Factory in Later*

*Victorian England*, London, 1980, pp. 177–8.

81 *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 408–9.

82 Register of Deaths, 4 Nov. 1905.

83 ‘Report of the Department of Labour’, *AJHR*, 1906, H–11, p. iii and transcript of Melissa Reid’s interview with Mr Robert Murray, 5 Aug. 1981, p. 8, History Department, OU.

84 There is a small literature on this subject but I found especially useful Peter Stalleybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London, 1986 and Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London, 1978.

85 The Chinese were too few to pose a threat and the labour market was segregated rather than segmented. There is a vast literature on this issue but see Edna Bonacich, ‘A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market’, *American Sociological Review*, v. 37 (1972), pp. 547–59 and ‘Advanced Capitalism and Black–White Race Relations in the United States: A Split Labor Market Interpretation’, *American Sociological Review*, v. 41 (1976), pp. 34–51 (she sees discrimination and racism as a function of economic threat). See too Moshe Semyonov, D. R. Hoyt and R. I. Scott, ‘Place, Race and Differential Occupational Opportunities’, *Demography*, v. 21 (1984), pp. 259–70 (who argue that the growth in the minority population pushes all members of the majority into higher occupations).

86 Stedman, ‘The Flat’, pp. 131–7.

87 *ODT*, 14 May 1907, Newspaper Clipping Book, T. K. Sidey MSS, 605/3. For James Lee’s work see Mee, *Turn of the Tide*, p. 36. For the general situation in the city see Susan Chivers, ‘Religion, Ethnicity and Race: The Mission of the Otago Church to the Chinese 1860–1950’, MA thesis, OU, 1992, chs 3 and 4.

88 The sources provide occasional glimpses of popular sectarianism. For instance Mabel Cartwright, the Deaconess, reported one woman she visited ‘wringing her hands and terrified because there were Catholics ... drinking next door’. See ‘Diary’, [28 Jan.] 1908.

89 E. Sinclair, ‘The Catholics of Caversham 1890–1920’, 452 class essay, OU, 1982, Tables 6 and 7.

90 *To the Is-Land: An Autobiography*, London, 1982, p. 52.

91 *Tussock Land: A Romance of New Zealand and the Commonwealth*, London, 1904, p. 95.

### 3: THE HANDICRAFTS: MASTERS AND JOURNEYMEN

1 For a useful discussion of the idea of craft and the definition of a handicraft see Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft: The Craftsman's Role in Society*, Oxford, 1981, ch. 1.

2 All statistics in this chapter are based on data in the electoral rolls for the two electorates which contained the entire region between 1902 and 1922: Caversham (which became part of Dunedin South in 1908) and Dunedin Central.

3 See Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft*, ch. 1 and Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*.

4 The best contemporary account of these trades and the labour process in each remains Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London*, vols 4–7, London, 1893–96.

5 *Official Record of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition Held at Dunedin, 1889–90*, Wellington, 1891, pp. 122–3.

6 In bootmaking, repair work became increasingly important; see transcript of Melissa Reid's interview with Mr Robert Murray, 5 Aug. 1981, pp. 1–2, History Department, OU.

7 For further discussion see above pp. 162–4.

8 The previous paragraphs are based on *Stone's Directory*. For the clothing industry see Clark, 'Dunedin in 1901', pp. 45–46 and Carol Brown, 'Aspects of the Clothing Industry in Dunedin, 1900–20', 452 class essay, OU, 1985.

9 Transcript of Melissa Reid's interview with Robert Murray, pp. 1–3. The debate over alcohol raged; for a defence see *Otago Liberal*, 2 Sept. 1905, p. 8 and for the contemporary debate see A. R. Grigg, 'The Attack on the Citadels of Liquordom: The Prohibition Movement in New Zealand, 1894–1914', Ph.D. thesis, OU, 1978.

10 This is broadly consistent with later findings; see L. D. Brian Heenan, 'Internal Migration: Inventory and Appraisal', in R. J. Warwick Neville and C. James O'Neill (eds), *The Population of New Zealand: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Auckland, 1979, pp. 68–71 and 79–81.

11 John Angus, 'City and Country, Change and Continuity: Electoral Politics in Otago, 1877–1893', Ph.D. thesis, OU, 1976, p. 36 and Table 1.11.

12 See Hugh Morrison, 'Property and Dwellings in Caversham', 452 class essay, OU, 1981; J. M. Boyd, 'Urban Radicals: A Study of the Radical Movement in Dunedin, 1887–1893', research thesis, OU, 1984, pp. 75–79; T. Burnard, 'Wills in Caversham', 452 class essay, OU, 1982; Claire Toynbee, 'Class and Social Structure in Nineteenth Century New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 13 (April 1979), pp. 65–82.

13 On truancy see B. Goyen, 'Truancy', 452 class essay, OU, 1983 and Howard F. Lee, 'Playing the Wag: The Anatomy of Truancy; A Study of Truancy in Otago's Primary Schools, 1902–1917', M.Ed. thesis, OU, 1983.

14 Apprenticeships have been ignored by historians and these comments are based largely on interviews conducted by Dr Brecher and myself in April 1987. On the apprenticeship system in general see Peter N. Stearns, *Lives of Labour: Work in a Maturing Industrial Society*, London 1975, ch. 2.

15 Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft*, ch. 10, points out that in crafts which lent themselves to mechanisation, invention and design came to be separated from the actual work involved in making a product. In crafts where this happened design manuals became popular and patents proliferated.

16 The custom of 'tramping' does not seem to have survived but the high incidence of transience among the unmarried suggests that it survived without its name. The Labour Department's investigation of factory production and wage rates further confirms the point for in all factory trades workers under the age of thirty-one worked considerably fewer weeks than older men; *AJHR*, 1911, H–11.

17 All Dunedin's major foundries were owned by successful masters but in 1900 all employed at least fifty men; see *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 321–4 and Angus, *The Ironmasters: The First One Hundred Years of H E Shacklock Ltd*, Dunedin, 1973 and G Methven & Company Ltd, 'Prospectus', 26 May 1930, Registrar of Companies, Dunedin, and the published version, kindly lent by Keith Harrison.

18 For a summary of several unpublished class essays on church membership see Brooking, 'Confessions of a Caversham Conspirator', pp. 55–59. See also Keith Furniss, 'The Moray Place Congregational Church', research thesis, OU, 1975, p. 40.

19 Angus, *The Ironmasters*, pp. 34–37 discusses Henry Shacklock's

close involvement in the work of his factory and pp. 44–45 the training he gave his sons.

20 Olssen, 'The "Working Class" in New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 8 (April 1974), p. 55.

21 Mary Isabella Lee, *The Not So Poor: An Autobiography*, ed. Annabel Cooper, Auckland, 1992, p. 106.

22 Carol Brown, 'Aspects of the Clothing Industry, 1900–1920' and Megan Adams, 'The Printing Industry and Linotype Technology', 452 class essay, OU, 1985. See also Department of Labour, *Awards, Agreements, Orders etc. of the Court of Arbitration* (hereafter *Awards*), v. 1 (1894–1900), pp. 155–9 (for the Wellington linotype operators' award, which was later granted in Christchurch and Dunedin); and pp. 200–8 (for the Canterbury bootmakers' award which was later granted in Dunedin). In both industries the men had only gone before the Court in order to control the new machines.

23 This conclusion was arrived at by Carol Brown, on the basis of oral interviews. Shops and shop assistants also remained ununionised; see Joe Smith, 'Legislation Affecting Shop Assistants', 452 class essay OU, 1985.

24 Adams, 'The Printing Industry'.

25 Contemporaries often commented on these examples; see 'Engineering and Kindred Industries: Report of Mr M. P. Cameron ...', *AJHR*, 1911, H–2, p. 2 and the annual reports of the Labour Department, *AJHR*, 1900–22, H–11.

26 *ODT*, 6 Jan. 1951 and Death Register, Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Dunedin.

27 Probate 2320, Dunedin High Court and Death Register.

28 The Death Register was searched for all of them and the Probate numbers were: Rutherford, 18892; Wilkinson, 789/56; Cowie, 11354; Todd, 24314; and Bartlett, 24085. I am indebted to Jim McAloon for the information about Sidey and Dawson.

29 James F. Neil, *The New Zealand Family Herb Doctor*, Dunedin, 1889 and Death Register.

30 Many commentators bemoaned the increasing difficulty in recruiting apprentices for the 'dirtier' trades. For the dentists see T. W. H. Brooking, *A History of Dentistry in New Zealand*, Dunedin, 1980, ch. 3, and pp. 48–51 for Sidey.

31 The quotations in this paragraph are from Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft*, pp. 208–9. See also Edward Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, New York, 1976, and for further discussion, above pp. 188–94.

32 For background see R. Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*, Oxford, 1976 and *The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-Century Britain, c. 1850–1900*, London, 1981. See also T. R. Tholfsen, *Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England*, London, 1976. G. S. Bradley, ‘The Otago Trades and Labour Council, 1880–1886’, research thesis, OU, 1974, p.76, noted the number of Freethought Association members active in the Trades Council.

33 For a fuller discussion of Lister’s views see above, pp. 171–3 and my essay in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, 1870–1900, Wellington, 1992, pp. 272–3. See too A. Birchall, ‘Sam Lister and the Otago Workman’, 452 class essay, OU, 1981.

34 Peter Stewart, *Type of a Century: 100 Years of Trade Unionism in the Printing Industry in Otago*, Dunedin, 1974; J. Hynes, ‘The Otago Typographers’ Association, 1898–1914’, 360 class essay, OU, 1979; and Adams, ‘The Printing Industry’.

35 Angus, *The Ironmasters*, pp. 14–15.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 35–37 and Furniss, ‘The Moral Place Congregational Church’, p. 40.

40 Angus, *The Ironmasters*, pp. 40–42.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 43–45.

42 R. Calder, ‘Brick-making in Dunedin, 1890–1920’; E. M. Seed, ‘The History of the Brick, Tile and Pottery Industries in Otago’, MA thesis, OU, 1954; and transcripts of interviews between Louise Tallentire and Mr G. Shiel, 1980 and Adair Bruorton and Miss G. J. Shiel, 29 May 1980, History Department, OU.

43 Seed, pp. 85–101.

44 Hawke, ‘Disaggregation of the New Zealand Labour Force 1871–1936’, Victoria University of Wellington (hereafter VUW) Working Papers in Economic History, 79/1 (Jan. 1979), Tables 8 and 9, pp. 28–31.

45 Angus, 'City and Country', Table 1.11, first used this technique.

46 *Stone's Directory* and the *Census* both reveal, at the local and national levels respectively, the changing occupational structure; the best analysis is P. M. Meuli, 'Occupational Change and Bourgeois Proliferation: A Study of the New Middle-class Expansion in New Zealand, 1896–1926', MA thesis, VUW, 1977.

47 Eric Hobsbawm, 'Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?', *Economic History Review*, v. 37 (1984), p. 356, has claimed that it is misleading to use the word artisan in the British context. As we shall see in Ch. 7, it remained in use here.

#### 4: SKILLED WOMEN WORKERS

1 Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 66. For a defense of the traditional view see John H. Goldthorpe, 'Women and Class Analysis: in Defence of the Conventional View', *Sociology*, v. 17 (Nov. 1983), pp. 465–88.

2 Some argue that women preferred this; others see such exclusion as a consequence of patriarchy.

3 Olssen, *Red Feds*, pp. 98–100.

4 Rosemary Goodyear, 'Blackboots and Pinafores: Childhood in Otago, 1900–1920', MA thesis, OU, 1992, ch. 6 and Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*, London, 1992, pp. 122–3.

5 Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, New York, 1978, pp. 53–55.

6 Catherine Hakim, 'Census Reports as Documentary Evidence: The Census Commentaries, 1801–1951', *Sociological Review*, v. 28 (Aug. 1980), p. 562; Desley Deacon, 'Political Arithmetic: The Nineteenth Century Australian Census and the Construction of the Dependent Woman', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, v. 11 (Autumn 1985), pp. 27–47; Marilyn Waring, *If Women Counted: What Men Value and What Women are Worth*, Wellington, 1988; and Nancy Folbre, 'The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth Century Economic Thought', *Signs*, v. 16 (Spring 1991), pp. 463–84.

7 See Julie Hynes, 'The Solo Women of Caversham: Unloved, Unknown

and Unequal', 452 class essay, OU, 1980. For a general discussion of the situation in New Zealand see Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family: 1880–1926', in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, Auckland, 1980, pp. 159–83 and Margaret Tennant, 'Natural Directions: the New Zealand Movement for Sexual Differentiation in Education During the Early Twentieth Century', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, v. 12 (Oct. 1977), pp. 142–53.

8 Karen Duder, 'Domestic Servants, Marriage and Mobility in Dunedin 1880–1890', research thesis, OU, 1989, pp. 4–5. This appears to have been part of a national trend, for Paul Husbands discovered the same pattern in Auckland; see 'The People of Freemans Bay', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1992, pp. 144, 147.

9 Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', pp. 161–7.

10 Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, p. 49 and Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*, ch. 6.

11 Sonya Rose, 'Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict: Exclusionary Strategies of Male Trade Unionists in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social History*, v. 13 (May 1988), p. 196.

12 Rose, 'Gender at Work: Sex, Class and Industrial Capitalism', *History Workshop Journal*, v. 21 (Spring 1986), pp. 113–31.

13 Lee, "'Playing the Wag'"; Karen Duder, 'Hegemony or Resistance: The Women of the Skilled Working Class and the Ideology of Domesticity and Respectability', MA thesis, OU, 1992, pp. 142–3.

14 In the colony, unlike the 'Home Country', women rarely worked in the fields and were never hired in industries such as coal mining. The gendered division of labour and the ideology of separate spheres undoubtedly won general acceptance in a society where men's work was often physically demanding.

15 Ronda Cooper, 'John Barr', *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. I, 1769–1869, Wellington, 1990, pp. 16–17. Bracken was something of a folk hero on The Flat; see above pp. 165, 206.

16 Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, pp. 14–15.

17 Peter Steams, *Lives of Labour: Work in a Maturing Industrial Society*, London, 1975, p. 273.

18 Cited by Duder, 'Hegemony or Resistance', p. 95.

19 *Census*, 1916, Part 2, p. 1 and Karen Duder, 'Hegemony or

Resistance', pp. 94–96, 106–10.

20 Elizabeth Pleck, 'Two Worlds in One: Work and Family', *Journal of Social History*, v. 10 (Winter 1976), pp. 178–95, persuasively argued that the separation of home and work, once seen as the major change involved in the shift from 'pre-modern' to 'modern' families, and a consequence of industrialisation, was not true of rural or working-class families in Britain.

21 David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development from 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 249–323.

22 W. B. Sutch, *The Quest for Security in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1966, p. 66.

23 *AJHR*, 1890, H–5.

24 Margaret Galt, 'Wealth and Income in New Zealand, 1870 to 1939', Ph.D. thesis, VUW, 1985, pp. 216–19 and Lucy Duncan, "'What Katy did in School': A Study of Curriculum Development in Dunedin Girls' Secondary Schools, 1900–1920", research thesis, OU, 1982.

25 Galt, p. 214. The relativity did not close for all women; see John E. Bartlett, 'Woven Together: The Industrial Workplace in the Otago Woollen Mills, 1871–1930', research thesis, OU, 1987, pp. 131–2.

26 See *AJHR*, 1907, H–11, p. xx; 1908, H–11, p. xxiv; 1909, p. xxxiii; and 1910, H–11, p. vii.

27 Rose, 'Gender at Work', pp. 122–8.

28 See n. 26 above.

29 Diana Unwin, 'Women in New Zealand Industry with Special Reference to Factory Industry and to Conditions in Dunedin', MA thesis, OU, 1944, pp. 13–15, 49–50.

30 *Awards*, v. 5, 1904, p. 20. I am indebted to Stephen Robertson for a 452 class essay on this topic, subsequently revised and published as 'Women Workers and the New Zealand Arbitration Court, 1894–1920', in Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates (eds), *Women, Work and the Labour Movement in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Sydney, 1991, pp. 30–41.

31 I have explored the exclusion of racial minorities in 'The New Zealand Labour Movement and Race', forthcoming in a series of conference papers from the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

- 32 Rose, 'Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict', p. 207.
- 33 Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', pp. 162–7.
- 34 'Reminiscences', pp. 30–31.
- 35 Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', Table 8.3, pp. 163–4.
- 36 *AJHR*, 1905, H–11, p. 98.
- 37 *AJHR*, 1911, H–11, p. xxxii and 1912, H–11, pp. xxx and lxxiv.
- 38 E.g. *AJHR*, 1918, H–11, p. 1 and above, pp. 144–7.
- 39 *Awards*, v. 17 (1916) p. 873.
- 40 'Report ...', *AJHR*, 1917, H–43, pp. 13–14, 33–34.
- 41 Wellington District Grocers' Assistants' and Drivers' Award, *Awards*, v. 19 (1918) p. 936.
- 42 *Ibid.*, v. 20 (1919), p. 1348.
- 43 Robertson, 'Women Workers', pp. 14–15. I have placed inverted commas around traditionally to signal that people often used the word to refer to the practices of their parents' generation.
- 44 *Awards*, v. 19 (1918), p. 889.
- 45 J. T. Paul, *Dunedin Operative Bootmakers' Union: Fifty Years of Effort, 1876–1926*, Dunedin, 1926, p. 15.
- 46 *Awards*, v. 19 (1918), p. 648.
- 47 The clothing industry is the best documented, largely because women were numerically dominant; see J. T. Paul, *Our Majority and the Afteryears, 1889–1939: The Dunedin Tailoresses' Union*, Dunedin, 1939 (a revised and enlarged version of the 1910 edition); R. T. Robertson, "'Sweating" in Dunedin 1888–1890', research thesis, OU, 1974; and Penelope Harper, 'The Dunedin Tailoresses' Union 1889–1914', research thesis, OU, 1988.
- 48 Rose, 'Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict', *Social History*, v. 13 (May 1988). She has more fully analysed the role of gender in *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England*, London, 1992.
- 49 For New Zealand see Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', pp. 173–81 and Shelley Griffiths, 'Feminism and the Ideology of Motherhood in New Zealand, 1896–1930', MA thesis, OU, 1984.
- 50 In the nineteenth century the idea of the gentleman was also democratised and in the colony all men assumed the status of gentlemen and insisted on the use of Mister. In the same way, married women all assumed the status of Ma'am. See David Castronovo, *The English*

*Gentleman: Images and Ideals in Literature and Society*, New York, 1987 and W. P. Morrell and D. W. Hall, *A History of New Zealand Life*, Christchurch, 1962, ch. 3.

51 Heidi Hartmann, 'Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex', *Signs*, v. 1 (Spring 1976), pp. 137–69 and 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union', in L. Sargent (ed.), *Women and Revolution*, Boston, 1981, pp. 20–22. See also Wally Secombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social History*, v. 2 (Jan. 1986), pp. 53–76.

52 John Rickard, *H. B. Higgins: The Rebel as Judge*, Sydney, 1984, pp. 171–4.

53 Cited by Noel Woods, *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1963, p. 96. See also Holt, *Arbitration*, p. 105.

54 James E. Le Rossignol and W. D. Stewart, *State Socialism in New Zealand*, New York, 1910, p. 239.

55 Cited by Holt, *Arbitration*, p. 105.

56 In Australia, interestingly, the one union known to have sought and secured equal pay during this period changed its mind before long, because men's wages began to fall to the woman's rate. The women, most of whom were married, preferred their husbands to earn a family wage. See Melanie Nolan, 'Sex or Class? The Politics of the First Equal Pay Campaign in Victoria', in Frances and Scates (eds), *Women, Work and the Labour Movement*, pp. 101–22.

57 Olssen, 'Women and Work', pp. 175–8.

58 Lee, *The Not So Poor*, p. 49.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

62 *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 63–65; Rachel Reynolds, *Pioneering in Australia and New Zealand: Incidents in the Life of the Late Mrs. W. H. Reynolds ...*, Dunedin, 1929; and Dorothy Page, 'Rachel Reynolds', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v II, 1870–1900, Wellington, 1992, pp. 419–20.

64 Lee, *The Not So Poor*, p. 69.

65 Cooper, 'Introduction' pp. 25–26, points out that the couple filled out

the 'Intention to Marry' form but do not seem to have legally wed, although, both in Scotland and among gypsies, marriages were still often made by mutual consent.

66 *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 138, 140.

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84 and for the painting sessions, p. 88. See too Olssen, *John A. Lee*, Dunedin, 1977, p. 2, where I wrongly assumed that Batchelor must have been the landlord.

68 *Not So Poor*, p. 100.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 118 and [John A. Lee], *Children of the Poor*, New York, 1934.

70 *Not So Poor*, p. 119. John A. Lee, with the help of a Rehabilitation loan, set up as a soap manufacturer before entering Parliament and later became a bookseller and publisher. His brother, Fred, became a storekeeper.

71 Esther Brown, *Scottish Mother*, New York, 1957, pp. 49–60.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

78 *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

79 *Ibid.*, pp. 103–14.

80 *Ibid.*, pp. 116–17.

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 130.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

84 *Ibid.*, pp. 145–6.

85 Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, pp. 16–19.

86 Carol Brown, 'The Clothing Trades', 452 class essay, OU, 1985.

87 The figures were eighty milliners and dressmakers, twenty-two drapers, and thirty-one confectioners.

88 'Reminiscences', p. 40.

89 Clark, 'Dunedin in 1901', p. 46.

90 Olssen, 'Women and Work', Table 8.4, p. 166. In 1905 only eighteen clothing factories in the country employed more than thirty people. Dunedin boasted five of them, and two had more than 500 employees.

91 *Awards*, v. 6 (1905), pp. 260–74; v. 10 (1909), pp. 645–7 and pp. 665–8 for tailors; and v. 14 (1913), pp. 967–9.

92 This is similar to the Australian pattern; see Raelene Francis, “‘No More Amazons’: Gender and Work Process in the Victorian Clothing Trades, 1890–1939”, *Labour History*, v. 50 (1986), pp. 95–131 and especially 101–2. For ‘team work’ see *Awards*, v. 10 (1909), p. 647 and the transcript of Carol Brown’s interview with Miss Laura Bolton (1985), p. 8.

93 Francis, “‘No More Amazons’”.

94 In the 1920s, after the Tailoresses’ Union had been absorbed into a Clothing Workers’ Union, the union tried to recruit shop tailoresses and regularly inspected all workshops; transcript of interview with Miss Bolton, p. 9.

95 *Awards*, v. 6 (1905), pp. 410–15 and interview with Miss Bolton, pp. 4, 10–11.

96 Bamford, ‘The Wax Vesta Match Factory’, pp. 5, 13 and Table 3 on p. [20] and transcript of interview with Robert Murray p. 7. See also *Awards*, v. 21 part 2 (1920), p. 1994ff. and v. 22, part 2 (1921), pp. 1189–90.

97 Duder, ‘Domestic Servants’, pp. 39–40, demonstrated that domestic servants usually married unskilled men. In Caversham, by contrast, the pattern was more blurred.

98 *AJHR*, 1896, H–6, p. 10, cited Unwin, p. 75.

99 *Maoriland Worker*, 20 Dec. 1922, p. 12 (I am indebted to Dr Barbara Brookes for this reference from her forthcoming book, ‘Natural Desires: A History of Women in New Zealand’). For Hill and McIndoe, see Mosley, *Faces in the Fire*, p. 17.

100 All the quotations in this paragraph are from Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*, New York, 1985, p. 42.

## 5: THE CARPENTERS

1 Clark, ‘Dunedin in 1901’, p. 48. For the situation in London, see Ernest Aves, ‘The Building Trades’, in Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People of London*, London, 1895, v. 5, pp. 31–160 (the work is discussed on pp. 72–74).

2 *OW*, 8 March 1889, p. 4.

3 These figures were derived from linking the names in the union's 'Membership Book' with the names given in the electoral rolls. For this exercise I used all last names beginning with the letters G through T. A further linking exercise was made with the names given annually in the D-3 list of the Railways Department, *AJHR*, D-3 *passim*. The 'Membership Book' is part of the archives of the Otago Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (hereafter ASC&J), Hocken Library.

4 It might be argued that the thirty-one who died need to be added to the stable total or eliminated from the total population.

5 This analysis is based on the union's 'Membership Book', 1914-20. Fifteen died on active service.

6 This sketch relies on *Stone's Directory* and Anscombe's obituary in the *Evening Star*, 11 Oct. 1948, p. 6; 'Certified Copy of Entry in the Register Book of Deaths, no. 125419'; his *The Inside History of the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition, Dunedin, 1925-26*, London, 1928; and Hardwicke Knight and Niel Wales, *Buildings of Dunedin: An Illustrated Architectural Guide to New Zealand's Victorian City*, Dunedin, 1988, pp. 72-75.

7 *AJHR*, 1906, H-11 and *passim* for earlier years.

8 *Ibid.*, p. xvii-xviii.

9 *Department of Labour Journal*, v. 17 (Aug. 1909), p. 815. This monthly journal provided intermittent reports from various unions on the state of various trades. The union's own records suggest that twenty members signed on; see above p. 206.

10 'Local Department: Dunedin, *AJHR*, 1910, H-11, p. xxxv.

11 'Report ...', *AJHR*, 1911, H-11, p. iii and for the 'Local Report ...', p. vi.

12 'Local Report: Dunedin', *AJHR*, 1915, H-11, p. 17; *passim*, 1916-25.

13 C. E. Hunt (Sec.) to T. Driver, 23 Nov. 1923 and to R. McArthur 28 Nov. 1923; 'Notice of Meeting for 11 Dec. 1923' and 'Notice of AGM, with Minutes of AGM, 18 Sept. 1925', ASC&J MSS.

14 Peter Stearns, *Lives of Labour*, ch. 2 provides a useful discussion of why workers chose particular jobs.

15 This is similar to the pattern discovered by E. W. Rogerson, "'Cosy Homes Multiply": a Study of Suburban Expansion in Western Auckland, 1918-31', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1976.

16 The number of employers has been calculated from the Department of Labour, *Awards*, v. 1 (1894–1900), pp. 466–7; v. 4 (1903), pp. 299–303, v. 12 (1911), pp. 879–84; v. 18 (1917), pp. 454–60; and v. 21 (1920), pp. 524–9. The union’s membership is taken from the *AJHR*, 1901–22.

17 ASC&J Minutes, 18 Nov. 1910 and *Directory*, 1914, pp. 447 (Clark) and 549 (Love).

18 Richard Price, *Masters, Unions, and Men: Work Control in Building and the Rise of Labour, 1830–1914*, New York, 1980, pp. 61–65 and C. E. Hunt (sec. Otago ASC&J) to Nat. Sec, 8 April 1922, Letterbook, ASC&J MSS.

19 Thorn to ‘Mother, Bros. & Sisters’, 17 Oct. 1875, kindly provided by Mrs Lorna Kent-Johnston.

20 Joseph Allen, ‘An Old Member’s Recollections’, *ASC&J Monthly Report*, July 1914, pp. 21–22.

21 Price, *Masters, Unions*, pp. 156–7.

22 *Ibid.*, ch. 6 for the new system

23 Thorn to Mother *et al.*, 17 Oct. 1875.

24 Thorn MSS, Hocken Library.

25 *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, v. 12 (1887), p. 237.

26 ‘Membership Book’, ASC&J MSS and Susan Patullo, ‘Caversham and The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners in Dunedin 1900–20’, 452 class essay, OU, 1983.

27 He kept a diary during this trip which is now in the Hocken Library.

28 His will, dated 7 March 1934 and Probate 14557, High Court Library, Dunedin.

29 James Fletcher, ‘Autobiography’, pp. 1–7, Fletcher Challenge Archives, Penrose.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 7 and Neil Robinson, *James Fletcher: Builder*, London and Auckland, 1970, p. 24.

31 Fletcher, ‘Autobiography’, p. 9.

32 ‘Membership Book’, ASC&J MSS.

33 This ‘cottage’ would more usually be described here as a modest villa, but British immigrants often used ‘cottage’ to describe any domestic building made of wood. The house still stands and the Historic Places Trust has classified it.

34 Fletcher, ‘Autobiography’, pp. 9–12. For Scofield’s superannuation,

ASC&J Minutes, 10 Jan. 1913.

35 Fletcher, 'Autobiography', pp. 12–13.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 14–28, 33; Robinson, *Fletcher*, pp. 29–30; and *Auckland Star*, 9 Oct. 1965, p. 5.

37 'ASRS Executive Interview with General Manager of Railways Wellington May 11th 1923', published as a supplement in *RR*, 6 April 1923.

38 Olssen, *John A. Lee*, Dunedin, 1977, p. 93.

39 This handsome home with its Dutch gables still stands, J.F. proudly staring at the street, and it too has been classified by the Historic Places Trust.

40 Cited by C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*, New York, 1956, p. xxi.

41 The wills, held in the High Court, were searched by my research assistant, Lizzie Harrison.

42 I have excluded from these calculations fifteen carpenters who died on active service during World War I.

43 Minutes, 1 May 1925.

44 Minutes of the ASC&J, 15 Nov. 1909, 31 Aug. and 28 Sept. 1917.

45 Almost every annual report from the local Department of Labour mentioned the problem; *AJHR*, H–11, 1906, 1908, 1913, *passim*. For Bingham's house see Knight and Wales, *Buildings of Dunedin*, p. 74.

46 C. E. Hunt (Sec. ASC&J) to R. Cairns, 18 Feb. 1924, ASC&J MSS.

47 9 Nov. 1888, p. 5.

48 Minutes of the ASC&J, 31 May, 26 July, and 6 Sept. 1890; for the first meeting of the new Building Trades' Union, see *OW*, 7 June 1890, p. 4; and for similar developments in Auckland, John F. Ewen, 'A History of Trade Unionism among the Carpenters and Joiners of the City and Suburbs of Auckland, 1873–1937', MA thesis, VUW, [1947], pp. 25–27.

49 Minutes of the ASC&J, 24 April 1906 and 15 March 1910.

50 *Ibid.*, 24 April and 8 May 1906 and 8 Jan. 1914.

51 *Ibid.*, 23 June 1906. This gave it the power of a monopolistic labour bureau. Only during the war, when the Union Steam Ship Company began employing carpenters to adapt merchant ships for transporting troops, did the union briefly lose control because it had not cited that company as a party to the award; e.g. Minutes, 23 July 1915.

52 Management Committee Minutes, 15 March 1910, ASC&J MSS.

Tom Bloodworth, 'A Word to Carpenters', *Maoriland Worker*, 14 July 1911, p. 4 said that the Manchester Conference had authorised such a step in 1910 to meet the conditions prevailing in Australia and New Zealand.

53 In Wellington the building labourers had their own union, but in Dunedin many were organised by the General Labourers' Union; see Stephen Kennedy, "'Really Concerned Men": A History of the Dunedin Labourer and His Union 1905–1911', research thesis, OU, 1978, pp. 32–33.

54 Minutes, 19 May and 18 Aug. 1906. In 1923 the local secretary complained that the system needed reforming; E. C. Hunt (Sec.) to Sec. Christchurch ASC&J, 19 Dec. 1923, Letterbook. For the background see Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration*, pp. 60–61.

55 For the federation see Minutes, 26 May, 9 June, 20 Sept. 1916, 24 Oct. and 19 Dec. 1919, and 16 Jan. 1920; for the Labour Office *ibid.*, 2, 16 March and 27 April 1917 and for further discussion see above p. 219.

56 E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour*, London, 1968, ch. 4.

57 This figure has been calculated from the 'Membership Book' and the 'Contribution Book'. See also *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Oct. 1916, p. 8, which stated that very few in Auckland had volunteered.

58 'Unemployment Book', ASC&J MSS.

59 These findings are consistent with Tom Brooking, David Thomson and Richard Martin, 'Persistence in Caversham', Caversham Project working paper, 1992.

60 Transcript of my interview with Mr Bert Grimmett, 24 May 1993, pp. 1–2.

61 Olssen and Boyd, 'The Skilled Workers ...', *NZJH*, v. 22 (Oct. 1988), p. 125.

62 Minutes, 19 July 1918.

63 The records of the various New Zealand branches, together with those now held in London, are sufficiently full to allow a surprisingly detailed study of carpenters and joiners in the English-speaking world. It is surprising that nobody has used them other than a Dutch scholar, Pieter Van Duin, 'White Building Workers and Coloured Competition in the South African Labour Market, c. 1890–1940', *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 59–90.

64 See Olssen, Boyd, and Thomson, 'Social Mobility in Caversham',

Caversham Project working paper, 1988, for the extent of downwards mobility; ASC&J Minutes, 5 March 1915, where the organiser said he had recruited forty new members in the workshops; and Aves, 'The Building Trades', in Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People*, v. 5, p. 141.

65 Minutes, 23 July and 6 Aug. 1915.

66 The 'Membership Book' records the branch that members first joined.

67 Unqualified preference allowed employers to hire anyone but they had to join the union to keep their job; see *Awards*, v. 12 (1911), p. 889 and *AJHR*, 1912, H-11, p. xii.

68 *AJHR*, 1900-22, H-11 (before 1912 it was the Dunedin branch but thereafter the Otago branch). There is usually a discrepancy between the membership listed by the Registrar of Unions and the figure in the union's own contribution book. The latter is usually much larger but includes many men transferring out of the city and those who had become unfinancial.

69 Minutes, 7 Aug. 1914.

70 The Court ruled that no union registered under the Arbitration Act could pursue any purpose not sanctioned by that Act; 'Ohinemuri Mines and Batteries Employees', *New Zealand Law Reports*, v. 36 (1917), p. 829.

71 Minutes of Special Meeting of benefit section members, 21 March 1925; Minutes of Ordinary Meeting, 3 April and 1 May 1925; Minutes of Executive, 11 Sept. 1925; and Minutes of AGM, 18 Sept. 1925.

72 J. D. Salmond, 'The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement from the Settlement to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1840-1894', Ph.D. thesis, University of NZ (OU), 1923, pp. 340-2. See *Red Feds*, pp. 76-77, for further analysis of the role of age cohorts.

73 Minutes, 30 April 1915. The Dominion Executive Board and the National Secretary, Ivor Hazell, resolutely opposed union involvement in politics, much to the annoyance of local activists; see Loydall's letter in *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Sept. 1912, pp. 6-7.

74 Minutes, 19 July 1918, and for Britain, Price, *Masters, Unions*, ch. 6. For further discussion, see above p. 219.

75 Minutes, 24 June 1905 and 'Fellow Members', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, May 1914, pp. 6-13.

76 Management Committee Minutes, 15 March 1910.

77 *ASC&J, Conference of Delegates Representing New Zealand*

*Branches, Aug. 1909*, Wellington, 1909, p. 18.

78 Minutes, 18 April, 30 May, 13 and 27 June, 1 and 22 Aug. 1913; 26 June, 10 July, 18 Sept., 16 and 25 Oct., 2 Nov., 23 Dec. 1914 and 8 and 26 Jan. 1915.

79 'Local Autonomy', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Jan. 1914, pp. 25–26; 'Under Rate Workers—the Bone of Contention', *ibid.*, April 1914, p. 11; E. Morton, 'For Your Consideration', *ibid.*, May 1914, pp. 23–24; 'Fellow Members', *ibid.*, pp. 6–13; and Ivor Hazell, the retiring national secretary, 'Address', *ibid.*, Dec. 1916, pp. 6–8. See too *ASC&J, Amendment of Rules*, Wellington, [1916]; and Minutes, 19 Feb., 11 and 25 June, 23 July and 9 Oct. 1916.

80 Debates occurred about which national body to join but issues relating to political strategies and affiliations appear frequently in the Minutes from 1909 onwards.

81 This paragraph is based upon the procedures and practices seen in the branch minutes. For an example of Manchester's annoyance, see Minutes, 2 July 1909.

82 By 1916 claims for loss of tools had virtually disappeared from the Minutes and in 1923, when the Water of Leith flooded and ruined the tools of many members, the union organised a public subscription; see *ASC&J Monthly Report*, 2 May 1923. In 1906, in an effort to conserve funds, superannuation became available only to men who had been 'totally incapacitated'. In return they had to serve as doorkeepers. It seems likely that the Old Age Pension made the union's superannuation scheme largely redundant.

83 See Ivor Hazell (National Secretary), 'Address', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, Dec. 1916, pp. 6–8 and 'Secretarial Notes', *ibid.*, April 1919, pp. 6–7, 10–12.

84 Minutes, 22 April 1909. See too 'Fellow Members', *ASC&J Monthly Report*, May 1914, pp. 6–13; and E. C. Hunt (Sec.) to Sec. Auckland Painters' Union, 25 March 1922 and to Sec. New Plymouth *ASC&J*, 12 Feb. 1924, Letterbook.

85 See Minutes, 6 July 1917 and, for the quotation, 21 May 1920.

86 Minutes, 9 Dec. 1905.

87 *Ibid.*, 3 March 1906.

88 *Ibid.*, 12 May 1906.

89 *Ibid.*, 22 May 1907.

90 *Ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1910 and 10 March 1911.

91 *Ibid.*, 6 May 1910.

92 E.g. *ibid.*, 2 May and 12 Dec. 1913 and 26 July and 7 Aug. 1914. Richard C. Torrance of Park Street, Kensington, is another example; see *Cyclopaedia*, p. 269.

93 E.C. Hunt (Sec.) to W. Melrose, 29 Dec. 1922, Letterbook.

94 *Stone's Directory*, 1928, pp. 742–4, placed an asterix besides each builder in the Trades Directory who belonged to the Association.

95 Hunt (Sec.) to Nat. Sec., 8 April 1922, Letterbook.

96 For the quotation, Hunt to C. O. Knewstubs, n.d. [June 1923], Letterbook and for Fletcher, 'Autobiography', p. 45.

## **6: THE HILLSIDE WORKSHOPS AND THE METAL TRADES**

1 'Engineering and Kindred Industries: Report of Mr M. P. Cameron ...', *AJHR*, 1911, H–2, p. 4.

2 Lucy Duncan, 'Hillside Railway Workshops 1875–1920', 452 class essay, OU, 1982, pp. 7–12 and David Thomson, 'Caversham—1902–1922: A Brief Survey of the Skilled ...', Caversham Project working paper, Dec. 1922.

3 *AJHR*, 1874, E–3, p. 72 and *Otago Witness*, 29 May 1875, p. 3.

4 *Ibid.*, 1880, E–1, p. 108 and 1881, D–1, p. 69.

5 Basic information about Hillside is assembled in 'Hillside Railway Workshops: Items of Interest to Visitors', New Zealand Government Railways, 1962; *Report of the Workshops Redevelopment Working Party*, Sept. 1978 (kindly lent by Euan McQueen); and Duncan, 'Hillside Railway Workshops 1875–1920', pp. 1–5. For the precise references see *AJHR*, 1886, D–1, p. 4; 1887, D–1, p. 4; 1892, D–2, p. 9; 1899, D–2, p. 13; 1904, D–2, p. 8; and 1905, D–2, p. 8.

6 Jeremy Brecher's interview with W. M. (Bill) Pimley, 30 March 1987, Tape 1, Side A, 022, 084, 304, Otago Early Settlers' Association. Pimley, who served his apprenticeship as a fitter at Addington, arrived at Hillside in 1915.

7 *Ibid.*, 401, 418.

8 In all countries workshops were organised in the same way; see Jeremy

Brecher and Erik Olssen, 'The Power of Shop Culture: The Labour Process in the New Zealand Railway Workshops, 1890–1930', *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 350–75.

9 Interview with Pimley, Tape 1, Side B, 437.

10 See D. Harris Hastings (time-keeper at Hillside) to Sidey, 6 Sept. 1906, Sidey MSS, 605/11.

11 *AJHR*, 1902, H–11, p. xiii and 1919, D–2, p. 30 (certainty is impossible because figures for workshops were not identified).

12 *Ibid.*, H–11, *passim*, 1904, H–11, p. 10 and Pimley Interview, Tape 1, Side B, 71–85.

13 There is surprisingly little known about the Division; see *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 1 March 1928, pp. 44–45.

14 Interview with Pimley, Tape 1, Side A, 247.

15 This paragraph is based on the letters and petitions in Railways' Department archives, R–3 14/4948/1, National Archives.

16 For instance, J. S. Collings, an Australian union organiser, in 'New Zealand—A Tory Cursed Land', *RR*, 1 June 1923, p. 247. This was the union's monthly paper.

17 They were: Petone, 1879; Wanganui, 1880; Addington, 1881; and Newmarket, 1884.

18 See *RR*, Feb. 1908, p. 9; 10 Feb. 1911, p. 65; 9 Feb. 1919, p. 57.

19 *RR*, 5 Mar. 1920, p. 125 for a subscription list; for the debate 18 Oct. 1918, p. 497, 25 July 1919, p. 328, 17 Oct. 1919, pp. 477–8.

20 Minutes of ASRS National Executive, 10 June 1890 (for Dunedin's vote) and 20 Jan. 1891, ASRS MSS, National Union of Railwaymen, Wellington. The MHRs were: 'Percival, Reeves, Pinkerton, Earnshaw, Tanner, Kelly, Hutchison'. This novel constitutional arrangement quickly proved unworkable, but as the Minutes make clear, some of the MHRs happily represented the union in Parliament; e.g. Minutes, 10 March, 17 July and 3 Sept. 1891, 17 June and 15 July 1892, and 5 June 1893.

21 J. D. Henning, 'Government Railwaymen and Industrial Relations: 1884–1894', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1984, chs. 1–3 and p. 83 for the quotation from *PD*, v. 78 (1892), p. 436. For Seddon see R. M. Burdon, *King Dick: A Biography of Richard John Seddon*, Christchurch, 1955, pp. 2–5.

22 There was one Appeal Board for each island, consisting of a judge

and two elected assessors, one from each division; 'Government Railways Act', *The Statutes of New Zealand ...*, Wellington, 1894, pp. 165–70.

23 For Ronayne, see *RR*, 9 Jan. 1909, p. 10 and 7 May 1909, p. 134. The conditions were: never to affiliate with an outside body, seek a closed shop, select officers not employed by the department and to confine their objects 'exclusively ... to ... their interests as railways employees'; Minutes, 10 Aug. 1894 (the men accepted 1120–4).

24 'Government Railways Classification Act', *Statutes*, 1896, pp. 114–27 and R. J. Polashek, *Government Administration in New Zealand*, Wellington and London, 1958, pp. 101–5. By 1910 this system had become extraordinarily complex with 'temporary casuals', 'emergency casuals', 'hour-to-hour casuals' and 'probationers' for each category; *RR*, 21 Oct. 1910, p. 456.

25 *Statutes*, 1896, pp. 114–27 and *RR*, Nov. 1897, p. 252 and Feb. 1898, p. 35. For the importance of promotion see Peter Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen: The Emergence and Growth of Railway Labour 1830–1870*, London, 1970, ch. 8 and Walter Licht, *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton, 1982, pp. 147–53.

26 Ronayne's testimony to an inquiry into allegations of 'systematic loafing' at the Addington Railway Workshops; *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 45. This was also the situation in Britain and North America; see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, pp. 113–18, 254–5, 263–4.

27 *PD*, v. 96 (1896), p. 570, Cadman.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 647–8, Cadman. Until 1906 the General Manager's office dealt with all cases but the burden of work then forced him to devolve responsibility to specialist boards; *RR*, 7 May 1909, p. 134 and 2 July 1909, p. 207. Railway workers in Britain and North America also demanded classification and seniority; see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, chs. 8–9 and Licht, *Railroad*, pp. 131, 212.

29 Craig Littler, 'Understanding Taylorism', *British Journal of Sociology*, v. 29 (June 1978), p. 187.

30 *PD*, v. 96 (1896), pp. 647–8 and ASRS National Executive Minutes, 18 Oct. 1895 to 28 May 1897, *passim*.

31 *PD*, *ibid.*, pp. 639–42 (Earnshaw); pp. 642–4 (Morrison); p. 646 (Captain Russell). The perks included one week's paid holiday each year, an

annual railway pass for the employee and his family and generous accident pay.

32 For further discussion see above pp. 198–9.

33 Interview with Pimley, Tape 1, Side A, 494 and for the National Executive's refusal to act on complaints about classification, Minutes, 4 Feb., 13 and 27 May, and 10 June 1898.

34 Work began in 1895, but it took until 1900 for the union and the government to reach agreement; ASRS Minutes, 8 June and 28 Sept. 1900. Such schemes were not unknown elsewhere on the railways; see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, pp. 158–62 and Licht, *Railroad*, pp. 212–13, 263.

35 RR, 2 July 1909, p. 203 and 24 Sept. 1926, p. 535. The turners and the ASRS sustained a long campaign to have turners appointed as foremen in the machine shops, but without success; *ASRS Biennial Conference, 1923, Interview with General Manager*, Wellington, 1923, p. 60.

36 Ronayne to Chief Locomotive Engineer, 26 Sept. 1896, R–3 14/5281 and General Manager to Director Seddon Memorial College, 7 March 1919, R–3 12/1505/1. For the change see RR, 24 Sept. 1926, pp. 534–5 and for examples of patronage E. Willis to Sidey 21 Jan. 1907; J. Caldwell to Sidey, 17 Aug. 1908; and J. S. Burnett to Sidey, n.d., Sidey MSS, 605/13.

37 Interviews with Pimley (see above n. 6); R. W. Rutherford, 14 April 1987; David Fenby, 13 April 1987; Lionel Jones, 13 March 1987; and Jim Addison, 24 April 1987 (all abstracts and tapes are held by the Otago Early Settlers' Association, Dunedin). Rutherford began at Hillside as an apprentice boilermaker in 1915 and was interviewed by Brecher and me; Fenby as an apprentice fitter in 1924 and was interviewed by Brecher; Jones worked there as a fitter in the 1940s and 1950s and was interviewed by Brecher; and Addison served his apprenticeship in the 1940s and was Director of Welfare Services in 1987. He provided an overview and a tour. I am also grateful to Jack Duncan for taking me (and various classes) on tours of the workshops.

38 Chief Mechanical Engineer to General Manager, 18 Dec. 1918, R3 12/1505/1. However, a number of those interviewed did, suggesting that the Chief Mechanical Engineer was making a point.

39 Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, pp. 45–50.

40 'Extract from Report ...' 10 July 1913 and 23 Feb. 1914, R3 12/1505/1.

41 'Railway Statement', *AJHR*, 1898, D-2, p. xi.

42 Some evidence suggests that able young men disliked seniority and preferred promotion to be based on merit alone; see *RR*, April 1908, pp. 6-7.

43 *RR* printed the verdict and the case for the union, 29 June 1923, pp. 307-16. See too the president's report to the *ASRS Biennial Conference*, 1923, pp. 1-2 and *RR*, 8 Feb. 1924, p. 41.

44 It is not clear when this policy was adopted but it was unquestioned by early this century; see *AJHR*, 1905, D-2, p. ix. American and British companies had also adopted similar policies at least a generation earlier; Licht, *Railroad*, pp. 169-72 and Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, pp. 148-9.

45 For length of service see Lucy Duncan, 'Hillside Railway Workshops', p. 17 and Table F, p. 18. The analysis of Hillside workers is based on the returns in *AJHR*, 1902, 1911, 1922, D-3.

46 It is not known when the principle was conceded in Britain, although the National Union of Railwaymen was still demanding it in 1911. In the United States the shop crafts obtained it only during the World War I and had to struggle to retain it.

47 Interview, Tape 1, Side A, 040, 056.

48 Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D-4A, p. 12.

49 On one occasion even the pro-government *ODT* thought it unfortunate that nine men with twenty-six dependants, two of whom had brothers in the NZEF and one of whom had served in the Boer War, had been laid off; see *Evening Star*, 23 Dec. 1915 and *ODT*, 24 Dec. 1915, Sidey MSS, 605/7.

50 Interviews with Pimley, Fenby, Jones and Rutherford.

51 *RR*, 30 July 1909, pp. 236-7.

52 Ronayne to Sec. ASRS, 7 May 1913, R3 12/2910/1.

53 *RR*, 21 Aug. 1908, p. 5 and 9 Feb. 1912, p. 57.

54 *RR*, 14 Jan. 1916, p. 30 and 10 March 1916, p. 126.

55 *RR*, 14 Dec. 1917, pp. 543-4 and 8 Feb. 1918, p. 143; R3 12/ 1505/1 for correspondence; and *Apprenticeship Question ... 1923: Precis of Proceedings at a Conference of Employers, Workers, the Education Department, and the Department of Labour ...*, Wellington, 1923.

56 This was the departmental rule; Chief Mechanical Engineer to

General Manager, 23 Nov. 1916, R3 12/1505/1.

57 Testimony of various foremen during Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D-4A: e.g. J. T. Henderson, p. 26. W. H. Cole, p. 31, complained that he had no leading hand, but this was unusual as he had ninety-one men to supervise.

58 *RR*, Feb. 1908, pp. 6-7, 8 March 1918, p. 117, and 3 May 1918, p. 229. For a rare photograph, see *RR*, 4 April 1924, p. 148.

59 E.g. *RR*, 29 May 1908, p. 9 and 14 Dec. 1917, p. 539.

60 Between 1896 and 1912 only 196 men secured this promotion. After that it became still harder; see *RR*, 28 June 1912, p. 277 and 21 Sept. 1917, p. 406.

61 Monte Calvert, *The Mechanical Engineer in America, 1830-1910: Professional Cultures in Conflict*, Baltimore, 1967, demonstrates that the champions of shop culture—which included many of the engineering-entrepreneurial elite—remained powerful until World War I. Their major opponents, the proponents of formal educational requirements for mechanical engineers, scarcely existed in New Zealand. Nor did such industries as electrical engineering, however, which first accepted the need for educational qualifications rather than an apprenticeship. In the US, however, all mechanical engineers agreed on the importance of productivity and profitability.

62 Interview with Pimley Tape 1, Side B, 031.

63 *RR*, May 1908, pp. 26-27.

64 The department suspended the ban during the flu epidemic. The union later argued that the men stayed at their work so much better when they could smoke and in 1923 the ban was permanently lifted; *ASRS Interview with General Manager of Railways ...*, Wellington, 1923, p. 1.

65 Interview with Rutherford.

66 See *RR*, 11 Dec. 1908, pp. 9-11.

67 Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D-4A, p. 34. For a fuller discussion see Olssen, 'Railway Workers and Scientific Management', in John E. Martin and Kerry Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History*, Palmerston North, 1991, pp. 128-41.

68 For instance see *RR*, 30 July 1909, p. 229; 19 Nov. 1909, pp. 381-2; 23 Sept. 1910, pp. 383, 387-8; 18 Nov. 1910, pp. 469, 503; 5 May 1911, p.

235; 25 Aug. 1911, pp. 383–4.

69 Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 24.

70 Interview with R. Rutherford. Men who had started later confirmed this, e.g. David Fenby and Jim Addison.

71 John Child, ‘Wages Policy and Wages Movements in New Zealand, 1914–1923’, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, v. 13 (1971), pp. 164–76.

72 Pimley Interview, Tape 1, Side B, 422 and *RR*, March 1908, pp. 5–6.

73 He appealed but lost; *RR*, 5 May 1911, p. 235.

74 Alex Walter to Sidey 8 May 1912, Sidey MSS, 605/18.

75 Interview with R. Rutherford, Sir Samuel Fay and Sir Vincent Raven, *Report of the Royal Commission into the Railway Service ...*, Wellington, 1924, p. xxxii; for Britain see Jeffreys, *Engineers*, pp. 170–89; Johnathan Zeitlin, ‘Engineers and Compositors’, in Royden Harrison and Zeitlin (eds), *Divisions of Labour: Skilled Workers and Technological Change in Nineteenth Century England*, Brighton, 1985 and William Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage on the Shop Floor*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990, pp. 193–207.

76 *RR*, 13 Jan. 1922, pp. 9–25 and 7 April 1922, pp. 167–8.

77 For the quotations, see Mark Perlman, *The Machinists*, Cambridge, Mass., 1961, p. 28 and for the outcome of the British strike, see Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage*, pp. 196–201.

78 Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 24.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

80 Olssen, ‘Railway Workers and Scientific Management’, pp. 130–3.

81 *AJHR*, 1909, Session I, D–4, p. 6 and for the definition *RR*, 5 March 1909, p. 68.

82 Taylor’s best-known work, *Scientific Management*, appeared only in 1911, years after the main outlines of his philosophy had been worked out and widely publicised. See David Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880–1920*, Madison, 1975 and *Frederick W. Taylor and the Rise of Scientific Management*, Madison, 1980 for a thorough analysis of scientific management in the United States, including: systematic planning, routing, cost accounting methods, systematic analysis of each machine’s capacity and the time needed for each operation, instruction and supervision of each worker, and the differential piece rate. Nelson, *Taylor*, pp. 102–3, discusses the diffusion of Taylor’s

ideas.

83 For a different view see Jim McAloon, 'Working Class Politics in Christchurch, 1905–1914', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1986, ch. 2.

84 *AJHR*, 1912, D–2, p. xvi. High-speed steel tools were used in almost every case at Addington; Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 35.

85 J. E. Jenkinson, *ibid.*, p. 8.

86 Interview with R. Rutherford; see also *RR*, 5 May 1911, p. 231.

87 H. H. Jackson, Addington Inquiry, *AJHR*, 1909, Session II, D–4A, p. 16.

88 *RR*, 24 Aug. 1917, p. 361 and Interview with Pimley, Side B, 387–426.

89 *RR*, 7 May 1909, p. 134; 'Report ...', *AJHR*, 1909, Session I, D–4 (including Ronayne's reply, pp. 8–12).

90 For the library, see *RR*, 21 Aug. 1908, p. 21 and 27 Aug. 1909, p. 281; the Pioneers, see John Searle to Sidey, 4 July 1908, Sidey MSS 605/13 and *RR*, 17 Dec. 1909, p. 446; and the brigade, *RR*, 7 May 1909, p. 150. For the 1920s see *RR*, 24 Aug. 1923, p. 422 and 21 Sept. 1923, p. 463.

91 Based on the regular column, 'About Ourselves', in *RR* (see 27 Sept. 1910, p. 407 and 26 Aug. 1921, p. 339, for instance).

92 *Evening Star*, 18 Feb. 1907 and 1 March 1915, Sidey MSS, 605/3 and 605/1.

93 E.g. *RR*, Feb. 1908, pp. 6–7. Pimley remarked that British immigrants tended to dominate the union but he may have been referring to a later period; Tape 2, Side B, 015–45.

94 *RR*, 5 March 1909, pp. 84, 92–93 and 27 Aug. 1909, p. 280.

95 *RR*, 11 March 1910, pp. 93–94 and 21 Oct. 1910, p. 445.

96 A. Peters (Sec.) to Sidey, 3 July and 13 Oct. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/16 and *RR*, 20 Sept. 1912, p. 408.

97 *RR*, 22 Sept. 1916, p. 429; 20 Oct. 1916, p. 476; 9 Feb. 1917, p. 87; and 4 May 1917, p. 183. Even in the late 1920s the department used the fact that women had been capable of operating certain machines to resist wage claims; see *RR*, 30 July 1926.

98 The shortage of apprentices created a shortage of tradesmen by 1920. The department tried to cope by increasing the pay for apprentices (and so

altering complex relativities) while hiring casuals at the maximum rate of pay. Hundreds of anomalies resulted. See General Manager to District Engineers, 20 Feb. 1920, R-3 12/2910/1; F. W. Furkert (Under-Secretary), 'Memo for Public Service Commissioner: Rates of Pay for Apprentices', 4 Oct. 1921, R-3 14/5281; and Chief Mechanical Engineer, 'Memo: Apprentices', 27 May 1925, R-3 12/1505/1.

99 *RR*, 2 June 1916, p. 231 and Brooking, Thomson and Martin, 'Persistence in Caversham'.

100 *RR*, 7 April 1922, p. 168.

101 E.g. *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 87 and 9 March 1917, p. 119.

102 *ODT*, 7 March 1916, Sidey MSS, 605/7; *RR*, 14 Dec. 1917, p. 569 and 28 June 1918, p. 291. The department informed the Military Service Board for Wellington that 2,600 employees had been given leave, which meant that they could return to their jobs; *RR*, 1 June 1917, p. 235.

103 Duncan, p. 4.

104 *RR*, 20 Oct. 1916, pp. 443–4, 476.

105 The union's reorganisation in 1910 had given the workshops' tradesmen two representatives on an executive board with eight members; 'The Amalgamated Society', *RR*, 11 March 1910, pp. 93–94.

106 The list of demands is the first document in a file named 'Tradesmen's Interview', ASRS MSS, National Union of Railwaymen, Wellington. I am indebted to the general secretary for permission to use these papers & the union's journal, and to the friendly co-operation of the staff.

107 'Executive Council's Interview with the Tradesmen's Deputation, May 18th, 1915', pp. 27–33 in 'Tradesmen's Interview' file, ASRS MSS.

108 J. Saunders to Mack, 19 June 1916, 'Interview' file, and for the vote, *PD*, v. 177 (1916), p. 611. Mack to 'My Dear Dick' [Hampton], 16 June 1916, 'Interview' file, gives the number of tradesmen at Hillside.

109 For the hearings see *AJHR*, 1916, I-6A and for the debate in the House *PD*, v. 177 (1916), pp. 611–17.

110 E.g. *RR*, 5 May 1916, p. 209 and *ODT*, 10 April 1916, Sidey MSS, 605/17.

111 *RR*, 28 June 1918, p. 305; 19 Sept. 1919, pp. 391–2 and 'Executive Interview with General Manager Railways, Wellington, May 11th 1923', pp. 6–7 (bound in *RR*, 6 April 1923).

112 *RR*, 26 July 1918, p. 367; 23 Aug. 1918, p. 397; and 4 April 1919, p. 135.

113 *RR*, 15 Nov. 1918, p. 574.

114 For the invasion, 27 June 1919, pp. 281, 283; 25 July 1919, p. 328; 17 Oct. 1919, pp. 477–8; and 5 March 1920, p. 130.

115 *RR*, 1 July 1921, p. 301 and *ASRS Biennial Conference 1923*, pp. 20, 26; for McLennan, 'The Casual', *RR*, 1 July 1921, p. 301; and for Hillside's attitude, *RR*, 15 Dec. 1922, p. 609.

116 *Report of the Royal Commission into the Railway Service, together with ... Evidence and Appendices*, Wellington, 1924.

117 For the strike ballot see *ASRS, Biennial Conference, 1925: Verbatim Report on 1924 Strike ...*, Wellington, 1925, p. 6; RTA to Coates, 24 June 1924, in 'Forming Tradesmen's Association, 1924', *ASRS MSS*; RTA to Railway Management Board, 24 June 1925, R3 14/5281; *RR*, 6 Feb. 1925, p. 1.

118 For Ingram see M. J. O'Connor to Mack, 14 Aug. 1924 and J. W. Toomey to Mack, 22 Aug. 1924. See also Melville to Mack, 4 and 16 Sept. 1924 and Earland to Mack, 19 Sept. 1924, in 'Forming', *ASRS MSS* and *RR*, 19 Sept. 1924, p. 412.

119 *RR*, 3 April 1925, p. 199 and 28 May 1926, p. 321.

120 RTA to Railway Management Board, 24 June 1925 and Sec. Management Board to Sec. *ASRS*, 13 Oct. 1929, R3 14/5281.

121 Chief Locomotive Engineer to General Manager, 9 Oct. 1911, R3, 25/1579/1.

122 See various letters for 1919 and T. L. McLean and David Mercer (Hillside) to General Manager, 7 April 1919, *ibid*.

123 10 June 1925, *ibid*.

124 Letter to Board, 27 July 1925 and Chairman Railway Board to Minister, 4 Sept. 1925, *ibid*.

125 'Extract from Report on Deputation from the Executive of the NZRTA to the Board of Management 9 October 1925', and for the quotations pp. 2, 7, 89–91 and *New Zealand Times*, 29 Oct. 1925, *ibid*.

126 'Extract ... Executive of the *ASRS* and the Members Railway Board 10/11/25', pp. 1, 21, *ibid*.

127 Sec. Railway Board to Sec. RTA, 25 Nov. 1925; *Gazette*, v. 53 (12 Aug. 1926); Chief Mechanical Engineer to Railways Board, 23 Oct. 1926;

Sec. Railway Board to Sec. ASRS, 10 Nov. 1926 and to Works Manager Hillside, 17 June 1927, *ibid*.

128 Spidy, 'Memo/3108', R3 1925/343/1. For a fuller discussion see Brecher and Olssen, 'The Power of Shop Culture ...', *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 370–5.

129 Spidy's movements can be followed through the D–2 series in *AJHR*, 1925, pp. ix, xxxiii; 1926, pp. iv–vi; 1927, p. v; 1928, p. viii–x; 1929, pp. iii–iv; 1930, p. iii.

130 *RR*, 24 Sept. 1926, pp. 507–8; 22 Oct. 1926, 572–3 and, in the same issue, 'ASRS Executive Council, Interview with Acting Minister of Railways ... November 16, 1926', which contained a long discussion on the premium bonus. The acting minister made it clear that there was no intention of introducing the premium bonus for a very long time but that he wanted it thoroughly discussed.

131 'Mr Coates is no Bureaucrat', *RR*, 2 July 1926, p. 339.

132 Fay-Raven, *Report*, p. xxxvi, reported that there had been no capital investment in the railways since 1915. For the opening see *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 2 July 1928, pp. 50–51 and 1 Aug. 1928, p. 45.

133 E.g., *RR*, 28 May 1927, pp. 305–7 (reprinted from the *ODT*).

134 Brecher and I reached the same conclusion, and the rest of this paragraph briefly summarises it; 'The Power of Shop Culture', *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 372–5.

## **7: FROM APATHY TO POLITICS: MASTERS AND JOURNEYMEN MOBILISE**

1 Stephen A. McKnight, 'The Evolution ...', in McKnight (ed.), *Voegelin's Search for Order in History*, Baton Rouge, 1978, p. 35.

2 For a defence of the method see Clifford Geertz, 'On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', *American Scientist*, v. 63 (1975), p. 52 and *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London, 1975.

3 I have sketched the principal differences in the 'Introduction' to Eric Fry (ed.), *Common Cause: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Labour History*, Wellington and Sydney, 1986, pp. 8–15, and have analysed them further in *The Red Feds*, Part II.

4 Historians have recognised the importance of locality in pre-1890

politics but thereafter discuss the subject in national terms; for Otago see Angus, 'City and Country: Change and Continuity: Electoral Politics in Otago, 1877–1893', Ph.D thesis, OU, 1976.

5 Mircea Eliade, *The Two and the One*, trans. J. M. Cohen, London, 1965, p. 201. I am also indebted to Murray Edelman, *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Acquiescence*, Chicago, [1971].

6 I use Clifford Geertz's definition of ideology as a map of 'problematic social reality' and a matrix for 'the creation of collective conscience'; see 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in David Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*, New York, 1964, p. 64. I have no quarrel with the neo-Marxist definition as meaning in the service of power but find it less useful; see John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication*, Oxford, 1990.

7 *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891–1912*, Auckland, 1988, pp. 48–52 (for immigrants) and pp. 42–46 and ch. 6 (populism). For British 'populism' see Joyce, *Visions of the People*; Michael Roe, *Kenealy and the Tichborne Case: A Study in Mid-Victorian Populism*, Melbourne, 1974, ch. 7; and Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–1880*, Cambridge, 1992 (I am grateful to Dr Brooking for drawing this book to my attention).

8 Stephen Clarke, 'The Voyage to Otago, 1870s', research thesis, OU, 1990.

9 Margaret Galt, 'Wealth and Income in New Zealand, c. 1870–c. 1939', Ph.D thesis, VUW, 1985.

10 Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 92 (for the quotation) and p. 85 (for Mill).

11 E.g. Robert Wilson, *ODT*, 25 Sept. 1884, p. 2 and George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Life and Work*, New York, 1972.

12 George Lichteim, *A Short History of Socialism*, London, 1970, pp. 175–6, 189; Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 122–8; and Joyce, *Visions of the People*, pp. 69–70, 75.

13 Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 122–8.

14 *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850–1900*, Auckland, 1989, pp. 15, 25 (for the quotations) and pp. 117–25 (for 'the Olssen thesis'). Most of the attacks on Fairburn's argument take issue with his claims about the incidence of transience in the

colony rather than his assumptions about what high levels of transience meant; see the issue of the *NZJH* devoted to his book, v. 25 (Oct. 1991).

15 'The "Working Class" in New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 8 (April 1974), pp. 44–60. Although I concluded that article by saying that we needed to know what class meant to previous generations, I did not anticipate the role of handicraft production.

16 Alexander Bathgate, *Colonial Experiences, or, Sketches of People and Places in the Province of Otago, New Zealand*, Glasgow, 1874, p. 9.

17 Angus, 'City and Country', v. 1, p. 122, and for the depression pp. 86–91, 121–3. For an excellent survey see A. H. McLintock, *The History of Otago: The Origins and Growth of a Wakefield Class Settlement*, Dunedin, 1949, ch. 13. McLintock grew up near The Glen and was a Caversham Baptist, like many of Caversham's bootmakers.

18 The older view is best presented by W. B. Sutch, 'The Long Depression, 1865–95', in *Colony or Nation? Economic Crises in New Zealand from the 1860s to the 1960s, Addresses and Papers*, selected and edited by Michael Turnbull, Sydney, 1966. Hawke's views are summarised by W. J. Gardner in 'A Colonial Economy', *Oxford History of New Zealand*, p. 75.

19 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950*, London, 1958 and *Key Words: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London, 1976.

20 *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, p. iv and successive annual reports of the Department of Labour; see especially, *AJHR*, 1919, H–11, p. 2. For the final quotation see *RR*, 30 June 1916, p. 277.

21 *ODT*, 31 March 1874, p. 2 and J. T. Paul, *Dunedin Operative Bootmakers' Union: Fifty Years of Effort, 1876–1926*, Dunedin, 1926, pp. 5–7.

22 Paul, *ibid.*, pp. 12–13 and J. D. Salmond, *New Zealand Labour's Pioneering Days: The History of the Labour Movement in New Zealand from 1840 to 1894*, (ed.) D. Crowley Auckland, 1950, p. 87.

23 Paul, *ibid.*, p. 10.

24 *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, pp. 16, 25 and pp. 33–34 for similar comments from James Dickson, master baker. The new union affiliated with the T&LC; Paul MSS Box 8, Hocken Library.

25 M. Beer, *A History of British Socialism*, rev. ed., London, 1940, ch. 7 and Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 153–4.

26 'The Rise and Progress of New Zealand', in Thomas Bracken, *Musing in Maoriland by Thomas Bracken with an Historical Sketch by Sir Robert Stout, K.C.M.G....*, Dunedin and Sydney, 1890, p. 9. For the earlier reference to handloom weavers see Thompson, *Making*, ch. 9 and Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 32–33.

27 Jones, *Languages of Class*, p. 154.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 153–8, 171; Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp. 184–91; and G. S. Bradley, 'The Otago Trades and Labour Council, 1880–1886', research thesis, OU, 1974, ch. 6.

29 Given the earlier comment about Maori 'waste lands' it should be noted that he was a trenchant critic of the government's policies towards the Parihaka Maori. See W. S. Broughton, 'Thomas Bracken', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, pp. 52–53

30 See above pp. 100–102.

31 *Proceedings of the New Zealand Trades and Labour Conference*, Dunedin, 1885, pp. 8–11 and Thorn to Mother and siblings, 17 Oct. 1875, transcribed and kindly lent by Mrs Loma Kent Johnson.

32 Less than 19 per cent of those entitled to vote took part in the first licensing poll and a majority favoured no reduction; see *AJHR*, 1881, H–37, pp. 5–6. For England, Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 176.

33 Salmond, *Pioneering Days*, pp. 126–8; Olssen, *Otago*, pp. 106–7; and for an analysis of the radicals of the early 1880s, Angus, 'City and Country', pp. 91–92, 97–100, 105–7, 225–37 (for the 1879 election), and 306–17 (for 1881).

34 Salmond, *Pioneering Days*, p. 151; Bradley, 'Otago Trades and Labour Council', pp. 10–11; and Angus, 'City and Country', pp. 327–33 (for 1881) and 391–6 (for 1884).

35 *Proceedings*, pp. 10–11.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–17, 25, 29, 30.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

38 Robert Slater to James Barr, 12 Sept. 1909, Lincoln Efford MSS, University of Canterbury Library.

39 Bradley, 'The Otago Trades and Labour Council', pp. 71–72 (residences), 73–74 (property).

40 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

41 *ODT*, 25 April 1883, p. 2 and for Fish, 17 April 1883, pp. 2–3. See

too Joyce, *Visions*, p. 311. The Tyler was also a lodge official.

42 'Mr Rutherford on Monopoly', *ODT*, 28 April 1893, p. 5.

43 *OW*, 29 Jan. 1887, p. 2.

44 *OW*, 16 April 1887, p. 3.

45 *ODT*, 30 May 1887, p. 3, cited by J. M. Boyd, 'Urban Radicals: A Study of the Radical Movement in Dunedin, 1887–1893', research thesis, OU, 1984, p. 18.

46 Boyd, pp. 20–21 and Angus, 'City and Country', p. 126.

47 Angus, 'City and Country', p. 441.

48 *Ibid.*, pp. 385, 388, 392–3 and v. 2, p. 66 and Boyd, 'Urban Radicals', p.21.

49 *OW*, 28 Jan. 1888, p. 4.

50 *OW*, 13 July 1888, p. 5 and for a detailed analysis of the vote (and its significance) see Keith Sinclair, 'The Significance of the "Scarecrow Ministry", 1887–1891', in Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, Auckland, 1963, pp. 113–14, 118–22.

51 *Evening Herald*, 19 and 20 Feb. 1889 and *OW*, 1 March 1889, p. 4 and 31 May 1889, p. 5.

52 Boyd, 'Urban Radicals', pp. 68–72.

53 *OW*, 1 March 1889, for a judicious contemporary assessment.

54 It seems that Lister may have been 'The Chiseler', although one snippet of evidence, and the name itself, suggests that Harry Warner, carpenter, wrote the column until he left Dunedin in 1891. When Lee Smith and Warner had an argument, Lee Smith's friends came looking for 'The Chiseler'; *OW*, 20 Sept. 1890, p. 4.

55 *OW*, 2 Aug. 1889, p. 4.

56 *OW*, 3 Jan. 1890, p. 4.

57 *OW*, 28 Dec. 1888, p. 4 and Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 67–68.

58 For the importance of education to working-class Liberals in England see Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp. 192–217.

59 *OW*, 8 Nov. 1889, p. 5.

60 For the Exhibition's impact see Geoffrey Vine, "'Doing a Good Work": The Origins and History of the Dunedin and Suburban Reserves Conservation Society, 1888–1915', research thesis, OU, 1983, pp. 14–16. For the membership see Paul, 'Trades Unionism in Otago: Its Rise and

Progress, 1881–1912’, *Souvenir Catalogue: Industrial Exhibition and Art Union*, Dunedin, [1912], p. 135; and Clive Pearson, ‘The Political Labour Movement in Dunedin, 1890–96’, research thesis, OU, 1974, p. 23. For the background Salmond, *Pioneering Days*, pp. 40–49, 78–97 and Angus, ‘City and Country’, pp. 127–33.

61 For the first quotation OW, 6 Sept. 1889, p. 5 and for the second, testimony of John A. Millar to Sweating Commission, *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, p. 13.

62 OW, 6 Sept. 1889, p. 4 and Paul, *Bootmakers*, p. 15.

63 OW, 4 Oct. 1889, p. 4.

64 OW, 29 Nov. 1889, p. 4.

65 Paul, ‘Unionism’, p. 83. Slater, Warner and Rodda were the three from Caversham.

66 OW, 5 April 1890, p. 5 and, for the Council’s formation, 1 Nov. 1889, p. 4. For the growth of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants see Henning, ‘Government Railwaymen’, p. 31.

67 Paul, *Bootmakers*, pp. 10–15. See also the evidence of Rodda, the union’s secretary, and Robert Ferguson to the Sweating Commission; *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, pp. 16, 25. For *Typo* see the editorials in 30 Aug., 27 Sept. and 29 Nov. 1890.

68 Evidence of James Dickson to Sweating Commission in *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, pp. 33–34. For Pinkerton see my essay, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, pp. 386–7.

69 E.g. ASRS to Rail Commissioners, 29 March 1890, reprinted in *RR*, June 1897, p. 127.

70 A. Y. Atkinson, ‘The Dunedin Theosophical Society, 1892–1900’, research thesis, OU, 1978 and Olssen, ‘Friendly Societies in New Zealand’.

71 OW, 9 Nov. 1888, p. 4 and Minutes of the ASC&J, 30 June, 14 July, 1 and 29 Dec. 1888.

72 Minutes ASC&J, 24 March 1888 and 26 Jan. 1889.

73 *Ibid.*, 10 March 1888, 18 May 1889, 3 and 31 May 1890, and 5 Oct. 1889.

74 *Ibid.*, 23 May, 9 Aug., 6 Sept., 18 Oct., 1 and 15 Nov. 1890; Paul, ‘Trade Unionism in Otago’, p. 90 for the Fund’s final balance sheet.

75 *Ibid.*, 31 May, 18 June, 26 July 1890. See too John Lee to Sir George Grey, 5 Aug. 1890, GLNZ LG(i), Grey MSS, Auckland Public Library,

asking him to assist in Christchurch and including his transcription of Warner's instructions.

76 E.g. *ibid.*, 23 May 1890.

77 OW, 31 Jan. 1890, p. 4 and 7 Feb., p. 1.

78 OW, 12 April 1890, p. 5.

79 Minutes of Executive Committee ASRS, 4, 5, 13, 19 and 26 Aug., 1890, ASRS MSS, National Union of Railwaymen.

80 The removal, in the last twenty years, of New Zealand's history from its Australian and Imperial contexts has seen Lane largely forgotten here (although he later became editor of the *New Zealand Herald*). He shaped and mirrored the mobilisation of 1888–90. His journalism, his novels and his Utopian attempt to create a 'New Australia' commanded an enormous following, yet the nature of his appeal is not easy to identify. Racism was central to his politics and he feared class conflict. The white nation mattered most to him, yet as Marilyn Lake, 'Socialism and Manhood: The Case of William Lane', *Labour History*, no. 50 (May 1986), p.54, has argued, his belief in the power of working men to save the nation from racial pollution also reflected 'an anxiety about gender ... as well as a consciousness of class.' The best biography of Lane remains Lloyd Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement*, Sydney, 1935.

81 Salmond, 'Origins', p. 323 and for the report *AJHR*, H-5, p. v. For the sales of Bellamy's book see J. B. Bradshaw, *New Zealand Today, 1884–1887*, London, 1888, p. 60.

82 OW, 22 March 1890, p. 1 and 21 June 1890, p. 4.

83 OW, 5 July 1890, p. 5.

84 OW, 6 Sept. 1890, p. 1 and 13 Sept., p. 4. For the origin and history of the strike see Salmond, 'The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement from the Settlement to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1840–1890', Ph.D thesis, OU, 1924, v. 1, pp. 104–23 (and many of the letters from contemporary union leaders to Salmond in v. 2, Appendix F). See too I. A. Merrett, 'The Maritime Strike of 1890 in the South Island', MA thesis, Canterbury, 1970.

85 J. Hutchinson, *The Wellington Bootmakers' Union, 1885–1917: A Short Review of the Work of Organization Incorporating the Great Auckland Strike of 1891*, Wellington, 1917, p. 12. James B. Hulbert, a foreman clicker, gave evidence before the Sweating Commission, and may

have been the same man; *AJHR*, H-5, p. 28.

86 OW, 30 Aug. 1890, p. 4.

87 OW, 23 Aug. 1890, p. 4 and Minutes of Executive ASRS, 14 Oct. 1890. For the previous points see OW, 11 Oct. and 1 Nov. 1890.

88 OW, 4 Oct. 1890, p. 1.

89 OW, 13 Sept. 1890, p. 4.

90 OW, 30 Aug. 1890, p. 5 and 13 Sept., p. 5.

91 OW, 7 Feb. 1890, p. 4 and 14 June 1890, p. 4.

92 OW, 24 May 1890, p. 4 when he warmly greeted the platform of the Financial Reform Association, a rather conservative group, and 4 Oct. 1890, p. 4.

93 See 'Conference to Settle Maritime Strike', *AJHR*, 1891, H-2, and William Belcher to J. D. Salmond, 19 July 1924, in Salmond, 'The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement', v. 2, Appendix F, p. 28.

94 Salmond, *ibid.*, v. 2, Appendix F, p. 81.

95 This information is from his obituary, *ODT*, 16 July 1931. For his role in organising a public holiday on 'Labour Day', see Paul, 'Unionism', pp. 94-95.

96 OW, 25 Oct. 1890, p. 1 and 1 Nov., pp. 4-5. See Joyce, *Visions*, p. 53: 'Public space was indeed a visual analogue of the vote.'

97 *Globe*, 29 Oct. 1890, p. 2 and for the carpenters' bows, ASC&J Minutes, 25 Oct. 1890.

98 *Globe*, 27 Oct. 1890, p. 2. For accounts of the day see *Globe*, 29 Oct. 1890, p. 2; OW, 1 Nov. 1890, p. 5; and Paul, 'Unionism', pp. 94-95.

99 OW, 16 and 23 Aug. 1890, p. 4 (for both).

100 OW, 10 May 1889, p. 4; 14 June 1890, p. 4; 8 Nov. 1890, p. 4.

101 OW, 5 July 1890, p. 4 and 27 Sept. 1890, p. 5.

102 OW, 20 Sept. 1890, p. 4.

103 OW 4 Oct. 1890, p. 4. For a discussion of their influence see Frank Rogers, 'The Influence of Political Theories in the Liberal Period, 1890-1912: Henry George and John Stuart Mill', in Chapman and Sinclair (eds), *Studies of a Small Democracy*, pp. 153-74.

104 Bede Nairn, *Civilising Capitalism: The Beginnings of the Australian Labor Party*, Canberra, 1973 and Robin Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia 1850-1910*, Melbourne, 1960.

105 Slater to Paul, Nov. 1912, Paul MSS, Box 8, Hocken Library.

106 Cited by Pearson, 'Political Labour Movement in Dunedin', p. 27.

107 Slater (Sec.) to Dawson, 13 Nov. 1890, in *OW*, 15 Nov. 1890, p. 8; *Globe*, 13 Nov. 1890, pp. 2, 4 (for speeches); and *ODT*, 22 Nov. 1890, p. 2

108 Pearson, 'Political Labour Movement', pp. 29–32 and Slater to Paul, Nov. 1912, Paul MSS, Box 8. See also Paul, *Bootmakers*, pp. 16, 22; Otago Typographers' Association Board of Management Minute Book, 11 Nov. 1890, Hocken Library; and *Globe*, 7 Jan. 1891, p. 4.

109 *OW*, 18 Oct. 1890, p. 5 and 8 Nov. 1890, p. 4.

110 Paul, 'Trade Unionism in Otago', p. 118, for the T&LC slogan; *Globe*, 7 Oct., p. 2 (for Electoral League) and 3 Nov. 1890, p. 2 (for 'rowdies'); and Warner to *OW*, 20 Dec. 1890, p. 5.

111 Penelope Harper, 'The Dunedin Tailoresses Union 1889–1914', research thesis, OU, 1988 provides the best coverage of the union's formation.

112 Penelope Harper and Melanie Nolan, 'Harriet Russell Morison', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, p. 336.

113 The quotations are from the *Tuapeka Times*, 13 Dec. 1890, cited with a denunciation by Lister in *OW*, 20 Dec. 1890, p. 4. For the results see *ODT*, 6 Dec. 1890, p. 4.

114 6 Dec. 1890. p. 2.

115 *OW*, 29 Nov. 1890, p.4. See too Angus, 'City and Country', ch. 9.

116 T&LC affiliated membership soared from 2,989 to 5,415 between August and October 1890 then fell to 1,641 in April 1891. Over the following year membership fell to 1,229; see Pearson, 'Political Labour Movement in Dunedin', p. 23 and Paul, 'Trade Unionism in Otago', pp. 87, 135.

117 R. Slater to L. Beer, 28 Aug. 1891, Paul MSS, Box 8.

118 E.g. *OW*, 20 Dec. 1890, p. 4.

119 Minutes, 19 Sept. 1891.

120 Pearson, 'The Political Labour Movement in Dunedin', pp. 45–46.

121 *Ibid.*, and for the affiliates, including the Tailoresses with 600 members and the Bootmakers with 200, see Paul, 'Unionism', p. 135. Four other affiliates had memberships larger than fifty and the rest were smaller. The 'Rules and Constitution of the Workers' Political Committee' are in the Paul MSS, Box 348.

122 See Kenneth W. Turner, 'Henry Smith Fish and the Opposition to

the Female Franchise in Dunedin, 1890–1893’, research thesis, OU, 1985, pp. 52–60.

123 Keith Furniss, ‘A Social History of the Moray Place Congregational Church’, research thesis, OU, 1975. For the NLA’s campaign, see William Bolt (Sec. NLA) to Slater, 19 Aug. 1891; Bolt to all unions, 10 Sept. 1892; and Slater to Bolt, 21 Aug. 1891, 10 and 24 Nov. 1892, Paul MSS, Box 8 (this file also includes several papers by Slater, written in 1912, recalling the events of the late 1880s and 1890s).

124 George Butlin to Slater, 8 May 1893, Stewart MSS, Series 20, box 52, f 39, and Boyd, ‘Urban Radicals’, p. 56.

125 *ODT*, 16 Sept. 1892, p. 2; *Cyclopaedia*, pp. 48–49; and Boyd, pp. 58–60.

126 *OW*, 25 March 1893, p. 6.

127 *ODT*, 25 May 1893, cited Paul, ‘Unionism in Otago’, pp. 92–93.

128 For instance, when 1,500 greeted ‘turn-coat’ Fish at the Railway Station with a barrage of abuse, dead rats and rotten eggs in November 1891 or, a year later, when 3,000 demonstrated in favour of the Shop Hours Bill outside A & T Inglis; *Globe*, 11 Nov. 1892, p. 2.

129 I am indebted to Professor Stuart Macintyre for drawing this to my attention; see also Ray Markey, *The Making of the Labor Party in New South Wales, 1880–1900*, Kensington, NSW, 1988.

130 Stout (Sec. NLA) to Slater, 28 Aug. 1893, Stewart MSS, series 20, box 50, f 1.

131 *ODT*, 5 Oct. 1893, p. 3 and ‘The Platform of the Workers’ Political Committee, Otago, 15 November 1893’, in ‘Clippings: Political Interest 1901–1911’, Stewart MSS.

132 *ODT*, 27 Oct. 1893, p. 8 (Lister did not print that remark).

133 *OW*, 4 and 25 Nov. 1893, p. 6 (for both).

134 The National Association also disowned him; W. M. Bok to Slater, 15 Nov. 1893, Stewart MSS, Series 20, box 50, f 39.

135 *OW*, 18 Feb. 1893, p. 8.

136 This is similar to the Australian pattern; see John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, London, 1988, p. 265.

137 *OW*, 11 Nov. 1893, p. 3; *ODT*, 18 Nov. 1890, p. 4; 21 Nov. 1893, p. 3; 28 Nov. 1893, p. 3; and 29 Nov. 1893, p. 2 for the result.

138 Seddon to Slater, 11 Dec. 1893, Stewart MSS, Series 20, box 50, f

39.

139 *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies*, pp. 117–25.

## **8: FROM LIBERALISM TO SOCIALISM, 1893–1922**

1 See Pierre Bordieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge, 1977, p. 170.

2 See Patricia Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1972; Raewyn Dalziel, 'The Colonial Helpmeet: Women's Role and the Vote in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 11 (Oct. 1977), pp. 112–23; and Dorothy Page, 'Introduction', in *The Suffragists: Women Who Worked for the Vote: Essays from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Wellington, 1993, pp. 1–23. I have explored this tension in 'Women, Work and Family: 1880–1926', in Bunkle and Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, pp. 173–81.

3 Edward Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, New York, 1976, Part 4 and especially pp. 641–54, 682–98.

4 ODT, 28 May 1891, p. 3.

5 His essay on 'Civilization', *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, v. 18, *Essays on Politics and Society*, edited by J. M. Robson, Toronto, 1977, p. 122.

6 OW, 15 Aug. 1891, p. 4.

7 Joyce, *Visions*, pp. 68–69 makes the point about the two capitals. For the quotation see Fish's comments in Trustees of the Otago Benevolent Institution, *Annual Report*, Dunedin, 1891, p. 13.

8 Pharos, *Some Historical Articles on Communism and Socialism: Their Dreams, The Experiments, Their Aims, Their Influence*, Christchurch, 1890.

9 OW, 30 Aug. 1890, p. 3.

10 OW, 11 Oct. 1890, p. 4 and 13 Dec. 1890, p. 2.

11 OW, 7 Oct. 1893, p. 6.

12 OW, 18 Feb. 1893, p. 1.

13 OW, 3 June 1893, p. 3 and 20 April 1895, p. 6. For romanticism see J. Mendilow, *The Romantic Tradition in British Political Thought*, London, 1986, ch. 6.

14 ODT, 6 Nov. 1893, cited by P. A. Mitchell, 'John Andrew Millar and the New Zealand Labour Movement', MA thesis, OU, 1947, pp. 68–69.

15 J. E. Sharfe, 'The Canterbury Workers' Educational Association: the Origins and Development 1915–1947: A Working Class Organisation?', MA thesis, Canterbury, 1989, pp. 13–14 and Elvin Hatch, 'The Girl Warne and Mrs Egan: Class Consciousness and Moral Belief in South Canterbury in 1890', unpublished paper (kindly lent by the author).

16 OW, 15 Dec. 1894, p. 1 and 4 Jan. 1896, p. 7.

17 OW, 1 April 1893, p. 6. For his break with Fish see Turner, 'Henry Smith Fish', pp. 60, 67, 86–87.

18 'The Platform of the Workers' Political Committee, Otago: 15 November 1893', 'Political [Clippings], 1901–11', Stewart MSS; and ODT, 11 Aug. 1893, p. 2.

19 Richard Shannon, 'The Fall of Reeves, 1893–1896', in Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), *Studies in a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, Auckland, 1963, pp. 127–52. I have tracked Reeves's influence in 'The Fabians', the first of four talks on 'Socialism in New Zealand', Radio New Zealand, 1990. The first Fabian Society in Dunedin formed only in 1897.

20 *The Not So Poor* and Cooper's 'Introduction', pp. 18–22. I must record my debt to John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity*, 2nd ed., Boston, 1987, ch. 22 (especially) for his discussion about the moral status in Western culture in being oppressed, in being the victim.

21 Sinclair, *Reeves*, pp. 207–10, 214–17.

22 PD, v. 83 (1893), p. 137.

23 PD, v. 96 (1896), pp. 639–42 and above, p. 130.

24 In discussing the origins of arbitration, historians have failed to note that voluntary systems became very popular in mid-Victorian Britain between skilled unions and employers; see Joyce, *Work*, pp. 70–72; for railways see Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, ch. 5 and ASRS National Executive Minutes, 3 Sept. 1891, 5 June 1893 and 10 Aug. 1894. For the background see Sinclair, *Reeves*, pp. 151–3, 205–7.

25 AJHR, 1890, H–5, p. v.

26 *The Labour Movement in Australasia: A Study in Social Democracy*, London, 1907, p. 207. Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration*, ch. 1 provides the best discussion of this law's origins.

27 Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, London, 1902, p.

xliv.

28 James Holt, 'Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand, 1894–1901: The Evolution of an Industrial Relations System', *NZJH*, v. 4 (Oct. 1980), pp. 184–5.

29 For a visit to Shacklock's see J. A. McCullough, 'Diary', 30 Nov. 1913, McCullough MSS, Canterbury Museum Library. McCullough was the workers' assessor from 1907 until 1923.

30 See *Awards*, v. 1 (1894–1901), pp. 58–62, 62–76 (Auckland) and pp. 155–9 (Wellington). In Dunedin the Otago Daily Times and Witness Co. took the initiative in introducing this technology and the Typographers battled to maintain the position of the compositors. They succeeded.

31 Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration*, p. 31.

32 The proceedings were published in the *AJHR*, 1891, H–48. In 1894 Reeves 'put in a (confidential) draft of a "Masters and Apprentices" bill—as amended by the "Trades Councils' Conference", 29.3.94', to the Labour Bills Committee, but even this tantalising titbit was later struck from the minutes; Minutes of Labour Bills Committee, 31 Aug. 1894, Le. 1/1894/4, Legislative Dept, National Archives.

33 *AJHR*, 1894, 1–13, and for Scoullar pp. 14–16.

34 Minutes of the Labour Bills Committee, 16 Oct. 1894, Le. 1/ 1894/4.

35 *Proceedings*, 1895, pp. 10, 12–13.

36 Minutes, 19 Aug. 1896, Le. 1/1896/4.

37 *Ibid.*, 25 Aug. 1896. The voting was 3–3, with Pinkerton and Millar voting with Morrison, while Earnshaw joined two opposition MHRs in opposing. It carried on Pinkerton's casting vote.

38 *Ibid.* The formula divided the apprenticeship into four periods and graduated the wage from 10 per cent of the 'standard rate' for journeymen or 'skilled operatives' in the first period to 50 per cent in the last.

39 *PD*, v. 95 (1896), p. 553.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 575.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 584–5 for Morrison. See above, pp. 77–81 for union efforts to confine women and Olssen, 'The New Zealand Labour Movement and Race', forthcoming.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 558–61 and Tregear to W. P. Reeves, 7 Oct. 1896, Letters from Men of Mark, Reeves MSS, Alexander Turnbull Library.

43 *Awards*, v. 1 (1894–1900), pp. 200–8 (Canterbury Bootmakers) and

pp. 312–13 (Dunedin Furniture Trade).

44 ‘Government Railways Department Classification’, *The Statutes of New Zealand ...*, Wellington, 1896, pp. 125–7 and above, pp. 128–31. For the union’s involvement see Minutes of ASRS National Executive, 18 Oct. 1895 through 28 May 1897.

45 Sidey listed the various species of casual; *RR*, 21 Oct. 1910, p. 456.

46 Dunedin Prohibition League Minute Book, 12 Oct. 1896, cited in Pearson, ‘The Political Labour Movement in Dunedin’, p. 58.

47 *ODT*, 2 Dec. 1896, p. 4.

48 By 1896 Earnshaw thought prohibition central to improving labour’s condition and destroying larrikinism, servility and destitution. He called on labour to dedicate itself to prohibition for the next five years; *ODT*, 30 Oct. 1896, p. 3. He had actually broken with the WPC in 1894; see Earnshaw to Slater, 26 Nov. 1894, Paul MSS, Box 8.

49 Pearson, ‘Political Labour Movement’, pp. 49–58.

50 Millar to Foreman (Sec. WPC), 28 Sept. 1896, Paul MSS, Box 8 and *ODT*, 5 Dec. 1896, p. 4.

51 *ODT*, cited Mitchell, ‘Millar’, p. 79 and *OW*, 11 Jan. 1896, p. 6. For the result see *ODT*, 5 Dec. 1896, p. 4, and for the new boundaries, *AJHR*, 1896, H–21, p. 14.

52 See various documents in Paul MSS, Box 8, including Pinkerton, Morrison and Hutchison to H. Foreman (Sec. WPC), 28 Sept. 1896. For Earnshaw’s break see Earnshaw to Slater, 26 Nov. 1894, Paul MSS, Box 8.

53 Earnshaw had also done best in this South Dunedin booth and this pattern is consistent with the evidence from Oamaru, where people living in the town’s roughest district, where brothels and pubs could be found, gave strong support to No License and prohibitionist politicians; Pamela Higgins, ‘The Prohibition Movement in Oamaru, 1893–1905’, research thesis, OU, 1978 and Heather Ward, ‘Making the World More Home Like: The Women’s Christian Temperance Union During World War One’, research thesis, OU, 1991.

54 For Warren see his obituary, *ODT*, 9 May 1936, p. 13 and for the result *Otago Witness*, 14 Dec. 1899, p. 21.

55 *Otago Witness*, 21 Sept. 1899, p. 40 and Paul, ‘Trade Unionism in Otago’, p. 121. It is interesting that the demands of the Knights, which appeared on their membership form, had been largely met; see amended

‘Proposition for Membership’ and James McIndoe (Master Workman) to Seddon, 19 Jan. 1898, Paul MSS, Box 8.

56 The *Sketcher* first appeared in 1898, apparently as a monthly, although a smaller weekly number was published for a time. In 1899 Rayner went to London and Paris to study but returned for the 1902 elections. He remained in Dunedin until 1907 and shifted to Christchurch just in time to help train David Low (who had been born in St Clair and still visited his fierce grandmother there). The Hocken Library holds a broken set of the *Sketcher*. See too David Low, *Low’s Autobiography*, London, 1956, pp. 35–36.

57 *ODT*, 13 Dec. 1901, p. 3 and 14 Dec. 1901, p. 1. According to Slater’s essay on the WPC, written for Paul in 1912, the T&LC and the WPC fell out over candidate selection for the by-election but he did not explain the issues because Paul knew more; Paul MSS, Box 8.

58 These details are taken from his obituary, *Evening Star*, 13 Jan. 1909, Sidey MSS 605/2, Hocken Library.

59 *ODT*, 10 Dec. 1901, p. 3 and 11 Dec. 1901, p. 4.

60 For the quotation see ‘A Parable’, *The Hustler*, [1902], and for his speeches *ODT*, 10 Dec. 1901, p. 3 and 17 Dec. 1901, p. 5.

61 For the campaign see *ODT*, Dec. 1901, *passim*. For an excellent analysis of the political salience of home-centred values see Judith Brett, *Robert Menzies’ Forgotten People*, Sydney, 1992, pp. 51–58.

62 *Ibid.*, 12 Dec. 1901, p. 7.

63 *Ibid.*, 13 Dec. 1901, p. 3.

64 *Ibid.*, 20 Dec. 1901, p. 5 for the polling booth returns.

65 *Otago Witness*, 26 Nov. 1902, p. 44; *ODT*, 26 Nov. 1902, p. 3; and 7 Dec. 1905, p. 3.

66 Based on ‘The Minute Book of T. K. Sidey’s South Dunedin Ladies’ Committee, 1902–11’, Sidey MSS, 605/30.

67 This paragraph is based on Sidey’s inwards correspondence for the period 1901–8. For the ‘left-wing’ Liberals see R. K. Newman, ‘Liberal Policy and the left wing, 1908–1911: A Study of Middle-class Radicalism in New Zealand’, MA thesis, Auckland, 1965.

68 By 1908 the Representation Commission had changed the electorate’s name from Caversham to Dunedin South and moved the streets above The Glen into Dunedin Central.

69 *Otago Liberal*, 4 March 1905, p. 11. Similar claims were made from time to time, usually about Walker Street, in ‘the devil’s half acre’; see *ODT*, 6 April 1907, p. 5 and W. A. V. Clark, ‘The Slums of Dunedin, 1900–1910’, *New Zealand Geographers’ Conference, Proceedings*, v. 3 (Aug. 1961), pp. 85–92.

70 *Ibid.*, 4 Feb. 1905, p. 7.

71 *ODT*, 29 Oct. 1908, Sidey MSS, 605/3 and the Minute Book of the Dunedin Branch of the IPL, 1905–8, Hocken Library.

72 *Evening Star*, 28 and 29 Oct. 1908, Sidey MSS, 605/3.

73 *ODT*, 13 Nov. 1908, Sidey MSS, 605/3.

74 *AJHR*, 1909, H–30C, p. 22.

75 *ODT* and *Evening Star*, 6 March 1909, Sidey MSS, 605/2.

76 J. A. McCullough, ‘Diary’, 17 May 1911.

77 ASC&J Minutes, 16 July, 13 and 27 Aug., 22 Oct. and 5 Nov. 1909. According to the Department of Labour *Journal*, v. 17 (April 1909), forty carpenters were ‘reported to be idle ...’.

78 *Evening Star*, 26 Jan. 1909, pp. 4, 8.

79 Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, p. 15.

80 *ODT*, 28 Sept. 1909, Sidey MSS, 605/2 and *Evening Star*, 6 March 1917, *ibid.*, 605/7.

81 ‘Earlier Days of Odd Fellowship in Dunedin.’

82 *Evening Star*, 18 Nov. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/2. His support for free trade in wheat and flour antagonised one constituent, Fred Hall of Wilkie & Co., Millers, who lived on the Main South Road; Hall to Sidey, 1 Aug. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/16.

83 *Commonweal*, v. 2 (Aug. 1908), p. 4 and (April 1908), p. 3. For the union’s formation see Stephen Kennedy, ‘“Really Concerned Men”: A History of the Dunedin Labourer and His Union, 1905–11’, research thesis, OU, 1978, pp. 7–8.

84 *Evening Star*, 17 Oct. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/2.

85 *Maoriland Worker*, 22 Sept. 1911, p. 5 and 16 June 1911, p. 12.

86 James Jackson to Sidey, 28 Sept. 1911, Sidey MSS, 605/16.

87 These men were office holders in 1908 and continued to occupy the key positions in the Socialist Party and, after 1913, the Social Democratic Party; see *Commonweal*, v. 3 (Sept. 1908), p. 2; McCarthy’s letterbooks, Hocken Library; Richard V. Tubbs, ‘Mark Silverstone and the Dunedin

Labour Movement, with Particular Reference to the Years 1912–1920’, research thesis, OU, 1981, pp. 1–3 and 75; and Justin T. Strang, ‘Against the Tide: Arthur McCarthy and the Formation of the Labour Party’, research thesis, OU, [1987], pp. 1–3.

88 See *Voice of Labour*, 22 Sept. 1911; ASC&J Minutes, 12 July 1909 (for Warren) and the letter from John Loydall, branch secretary, to ASC&J *Monthly Report*, Sept. 1912, pp. 6–7; and for the local form of the new party *Weekly Herald*, 31 July 1909, p. 1 and 18 Feb. 1911, p. 7. For union disaffection with the Liberals and the Arbitration Court, see my *Red Feds*, pp. 53–58, 64–65.

89 R. Slater and A. R. Jackson for the NZLP, *To the Electors of Dunedin Central*, [Dunedin, 1911], Hocken Library, and ASC&J Minutes, 10 March and 22 Sept. 1911.

90 *AJHR*, 1912, H–12A, p. 24 for the official returns and *Otago Witness*, 16 July 1929, p. 35 for Arnold’s obituary.

91 Stephen Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, pp. 33, 49 and Appendices III and IV; for candidate selection see ASC&J Minutes, 8 and 22 Sept. 1911.

92 The minute books of this committee for 1905–11 are in the Sidey MSS, 605/30.

93 The party’s history locally has been pieced together from the *Weekly Herald*, the paper of the Wellington and Canterbury Trades Councils; see 18 Feb. 1911, p. 7; 18 March 1911, p. 3; 24 May 1911, p. 3; 28 June 1911, p. 3; and 12 July 1911, p. 1. For its platform see the LRC’s *Manifesto to the People*, [Dunedin, 1911] and *Notice of Meeting*, [Dunedin, 1911], Mark Silverstone MSS, Hocken Library.

94 He turned to the hard-drinking secretary of the Seamen for help; William Belcher to MacManus, 18 Oct. 1911, Belcher Letterbook, p. 447, Federated Seamen’s Union MSS, Alexander Turnbull Library. I am indebted to MacManus’s daughter, Mrs Preston, for a series of conversations about her father and a Letterbook, kept when he was secretary for the Good Intent Lodge, Druids, in 1914–15, which contains many press clippings.

95 Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, pp. 14, 32; ‘Cost of Living in New Zealand: Report and Evidence’, *AJHR*, 1912, H–18, p. 5; *Weekly Herald*, 4 March 1911, p. 4 and 10 May 1911, p. 3; and for a brief sketch,

McCullough, 'Diary', 5 Feb. 1908. See too John Martin's essay on Boreham in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, v. 2, pp. 50–51.

96 E.g. Ted Howard in *Maoriland Worker*, 29 March 1912, p. 7.

97 For the city and the Dominion see Olssen, 'The Origins of the Labour Party: A Reconsideration', *NZJH*, v. 21 (April 1987), pp. 82–90.

98 ASC&J Minutes, 8 Aug. 1913 and the ballot paper in Paul MSS, Box 26. See too the 'Tailoresses' membership certificate, Hocken Library, and for the branch Paul to David McLaren, 30 Jan. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 18. There were a confusing number of labour parties in this period; for this one see *Red Feds*, ch. 4.

99 *Evening Star*, 26 April 1913, p. 2 for a report of their speeches and 1 May 1913, p. 7 for the results. This is similar to the situation reported for Christchurch; see James Watson, 'An Independent Working Class?', in John E. Martin and Kerry Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement*, Palmerston North, 1991, pp. 184–96.

100 McCullough, 'Diary', 1 Feb. 1908 for the description and for the campaign *Evening Star*, 21 April 1913, p. 5 and 1 May 1913, p. 7.

101 Paul to David McLaren, 30 Jan. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 18 and *Evening Star*, 10 Dec. 1914, Sidey MSS, 605/1 p. 56. The Labour-Socialist coalition was even more complicated. Following the defeat of the Waihi strike, the Federation of Labour convened two 'Unity' Conferences which established a United Federation of Labour and a Social Democratic Party. Most Otago unions and the T&LC refused to join either. The T&LC reorganised itself into an Otago Labour Council with political and industrial functions. After the UFL changed its constitution in 1914 the OLC affiliated and entered the coalition to contest the 1914 elections. The OLC agreed that the SDP would become the political arm of the OLC after polling day but later reneged; see 'Report...Joint Conference of the Otago Labour Council and Social Democratic Party, 12 August 1914' and various other documents in Paul MSS, Box 60. See also Breen (Sec. OLC) to all affiliates, 14 Sept. 1914 and to Paul, 22 Oct. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 5.

102 ODT, 15 Oct. 1914, Sidey MSS, 605/1.

103 *Evening Star*, 11 Dec. 1914, *ibid.*, pp. 5, 7–8; 'Otago Labour Council, Proposed Rules, Adopted ... 19 March 1914', Silverstone MSS, Hocken Library; Paul to David McLaren, 30 Jan. 1914, Paul MSS, Box 18; and 'Dunedin', *Australasian Typographers' Journal*, v. 14 (June 1914), p.

22.

104 Munro defended his loyalty and gave an accurate account of the issues in *Dunedin Central Election*, Dunedin, 1915.

105 The names of those members of the ASC&J were recorded in the 'Membership Book'. For the workshops see *RR*, 2 June 1916, p. 231 and 9 March 1917, p. 133.

106 *RR*, 28 July 1916, p. 315.

107 'New Zealand', *Round Table*, v. 6 (March 1916), p. 385 for the rumours. For the meeting see *RR*, 28 July 1916, p. 341 and *ODT*, 22 May 1915, Sidey MSS, 605/1. For the Labour Council's position see *ODT*, 30 Oct. 1915, p. 4 and Paul to Hiram Hunter (Sec. United Federation of Labour), 7 Dec. 1915, Paul MSS, Box 5. Paul was now a member of the UFL Executive.

108 *RR*, 11 Feb. 1916, pp. 57–58. This was the position of the Social Democratic Party, locally and nationally, except that it favoured strike action 'to resist it to the utmost'; Arthur McCarthy (Sec. Dunedin Branch) to National Secretary, 12 Nov. 1915, McCarthy MSS, Hocken Library. Although the branch had few members the Labourers' Union affiliated; Peter Fraser to McCarthy, 21 March 1914, McCarthy MSS.

109 *ODT*, 10 March 1916, Sidey MSS, 605/7.

110 Paul's position was quite complex but he voted against the third reading of the Military Service Act; *PD*, v. 175 (5 June 1916), p. 879.

111 See McCarthy to Peter Fraser, 28 Feb. 1916, McCarthy MSS; R. Breen (Sec. OLC) to Paul, 26 June 1916, Paul MSS, Box 482; ASC&J Minutes, 21 Jan., 9 and 23 June, 20 Sept. and 27 Oct. 1916; and E. J. Howard, the northern socialist, *Maoriland Worker*, 29 March 1912, p. 7. For the attitude of local SDP members, see Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', ch. 3.

112 Silverstone's notes on the inaugural meeting of the LRC, 28 Sept. 1916, Silverstone MSS; 'Minutes...', 28 Sept. 1916, Paul MSS, Box 480; *ODT*, 11 Nov. 1916, p. 5 for Kellett; and Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', pp. 42–43.

113 Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', pp. 43–47.

114 At Hillside three amendments were beaten before a motion congratulating Paul for his December statement passed; *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 88 and ASC&J Minutes, 22 Dec. 1916.

115 Silverstone to F. Jones, 10 Jan. 1917 and 'Report of the Joint

Committee on the Political Organisation of Labour, April 19, 1917', Silverstone MSS; [OLC] 'Circular to all Affiliated Unions, 2 May 1917', Paul MSS, Box 18; *ODT*, 6 June 1917, p. 7; Evans to National Secretary NZLP, 31 July 1917, Paul MSS, Box 60; and Kellett, *To the Hectors of Dunedin North*, Dunedin, 1919.

116 *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 88.

117 *RR*, 9 March 1917, p. 133, 26 July 1918, p. 343; for ASC&J see Minutes, 22 Dec. 1916, 30 March and 27 April 1917; for Sidey's remarks *ODT*, 10 May 1917, Sidey MSS, 605/7. For the numbers of labourers see 'First Annual Report of Central Labour Office ... for the Year ending June 8th 1918', Silverstone MSS, and for Boreham's views, *Maoriland Worker*, 31 July 1918, p. 5.

118 *Evening Star*, 16 May 1917 and *ODT*, 16 May 1917 Sidey MSS, 605/7 and *ODT*, 5 May 1917, p. 8 for Boreham's comments when leading a deputation from the Cordial Workers' Union. Some 18,000 people in Dunedin South and Central signed the petition; *ibid.*, 22 June 1917.

119 *RR*, 4 May 1917, p. 183 and 1 June 1917, p. 231. Shaun F. Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism: J. T. Paul and the New Zealand Labour Movement 1916–1922', research thesis, OU, 1993, pp. ii, 32–35.

120 Support for prohibition was consistently strongest in St Clair, followed by St Peter's or the Wesleyan Schoolroom on Cargill Road, Parkside, and Caversham township (in 1919 St Peter's gave over 63 per cent and the Marion Street booth a whopping 70 per cent to prohibition). The Kensington–South Dunedin booths usually gave between 50 and 55 per cent to continuance.

121 McCarthy to John Glover, 15 Feb, 1916, McCarthy MSS, Hocken Library.

122 This paragraph has been shaped by Marilyn Lake, 'Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation ...', *Gender and History*, v. 4 (Autumn 1992), pp. 305–22 and 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context', *Historical Studies*, v. 22 (April 1986), pp. 116–31.

123 ASC&J Minutes, 19 March; for the LRC see *ODT*, 30 March 1915, p. 4; and for the Association see *RR*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 88.

124 *RR*, 22 Sept. 1916, p. 404.

125 *RR*, 20 Sept. 1918, pp. 435–6; 10 Jan. 1919, p. 625; 25 July 1919,

pp. 301–2. See too Margaret Tennant, 'Natural Directions: The New Zealand Movement for Sexual Differentiation in Education During the Early Twentieth Century', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, v. 12 (Oct. 1977), pp. 142–53.

126 RR, 30 June and 25 Aug. 1916, pp. 277 and 363 respectively; for Paul see ODT, 6 Jan. 1917, p. 12.

127 RR, 7 April 1916, p. 169 and ASC&J Minutes, 26 May, 9 June and 20 Sept. 1916; for the Central Labour Office; Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', ch. 5; Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', pp. 13–18; RR, 28 June 1918, p. 317 and 4 April 1919, p. 135 (WEA); and for the affiliation of ASRS and Hillside, 'Report of Transport Workers' Conference', 26–28 June 1916, Jim Roberts MSS, VUW; RR, 5 April 1918, p. 159, 12 Dec. 1919, p. 571, and 22 Sept. 1922, pp. 476–7. On the importance of WEA see Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', pp. 35–36 and B. S. Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence: The Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party, 1900–1919*, Auckland, 1980, p. 90. For Guild Socialism see Strang, 'Against the Tide', pp. 36–38; Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', pp. 13–15; and two essays by Jack Vowles, 'Ideology and the Formation of the New Zealand Labour Party', *NZJH*, v. 16 (April 1982), 52–54 and 'From Syndicalism to Guild Socialism: Some Neglected Aspects of the Ideology of the Labour Movement, 1914–1923', in Martin & Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement*, pp. 283–303.

128 RR, 9 March 1917, pp. 111–15; 27 July 1917, p. 332; 24 Aug. 1917, p. 372.

129 RR, 15 Nov. 1918, pp. 530, 535, 570 and 7 March 1919, p. 62.

130 RR, 14 Dec. 1917, p. 569.

131 Max Satchell, 'Pulpit Politics: the Protestant Political Association in Dunedin, 1917 to 1922', research thesis, OU, 1983, pp. 70–73.

132 Sinclair, 'The Catholics of Caversham', analyses the occupations of church members. See also Richard P. Davis, 'The New Zealand Labour Party's "Irish Campaign", 1916–1922', *Political Science*, v. 19 (Oct. 1967), pp. 13–23 and P. S. O'Connor, 'Sectarian Conflict in New Zealand, 1911–1920', *Political Science*, v. 19 (1967), pp. 3–16.

133 'OLRC Parliamentary Selection Ballot 8 Oct. 1919', Paul MSS, Box 486 and T. Leyland to Sidey, 6 Oct. 1919, Sidey MSS, 205/22–3. For the new branches see *Maoriland Worker*, 26 March 1919, p. 5, 4 June 1919, p.

5, and 11 June 1919, p. 5. Caversham's executive consisted of two labourers, one carter, a clicker (Jones), a tram conductor and a tinsmith.

134 A. M. Mercer to Sidey, 16 Oct. 1919, *ibid.*, 605/22–23. Paul apologised to the Liberal leader, Sir Joseph Ward, when Sidey changed his mind; Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', p. 45.

135 A. Kane to Sidey, 17 Oct. 1919, *ibid.*, 205/22–23. The Paul MSS, Box 484, contains his replies to various organisations. See too Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism', ch. 5.

136 Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone', ch. 5.

137 McCarthy to John Glover, 13 April 1917, McCarthy MSS.

138 From a letter pasted into the MacManus Letterbook, dated 20 Nov. [early 1920s]. Labour's commitment to land nationalisation easily met the needs of leaseholders.

139 The argument here involves a rejection of my earlier position, expressed in 'The Origins of the Labour Party ...', *NZJH*, v. 21 (April 1987), pp. 79–96, which accorded primacy to social processes and especially the transformation of work. These may have been important nationally, but not decisive, and were insignificant locally.

140 *RR*, 10 Feb. 1922, p. 96 and 5 May 1922, p. 230.

141 Gilchrist to Paul, 27 March 1922; Jones to Paul, 18 May 1922; L. Evans (Sec. OLC) to Paul, 19 May 1922; Paul to Gilchrist, 19 May, 1922, Paul MSS; and E. C. Hunt (Sec. ASC&J) to J. Gilchrist, 9 March 1922, ASC&J Letterbook.

142 *RR*, 10 Feb. 1922, p. 57 and 28 July 1922, pp. 345–7. See also *AJHR*, 1923, H–33A, pp. 25–26 (for the electoral vote) and 33B, p. 17 (for the licensing poll).

143 There is surprisingly little on the impact of the war on the meaning of gender but see Jill Roe, 'Chivalry and Social Policy in the Antipodes', *Historical Studies*, v. 22 (April 1987), pp. 395–410. For the views of socialist women, see Olssen, 'Women, Work and Family', in Bunkle & Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, pp. 177–8.

## 9: SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1 See J. Rule, 'The Property of Skill in the Period of Manufacture' and K. McLelland, 'Time to Work, Time to Live: Some Aspects of Work and

the Re-formation of Class in Britain, 1850–1880’, both in Patrick Joyce (ed.), *The Historical Meanings of Work*, New York, 1987.

2 Joyce, *Visions*, p. 90.

3 For gifts, see transcripts of interviews with Robert Rutherford, recalling his grandfather’s practice, p. 4, and Robert Murray, p. 5. For credit, see transcripts of interviews with William Rutherford, p. 9, and Miss Shiel, pp. 9–10, 26.

4 Penn, *Skilled Workers in the Class Structure*, p. 121.

5 Minute for 16 September, *Rise and Progress of the Loyal Caversham Lodge*, p. 26.

6 A. Lynch, ‘Otago 17 – Southland 10: A Social History of Rugby in the 1940s’, research thesis, OU, 1984, p. 19 and Duder, ‘Hegemony or Resistance’, p. 107.

7 All the interviews about growing up in Caversham reveal the importance of kinship.

8 Olssen, *Red Feds*, ch. 3 discusses the pre-war ideological context and Barry Gustafson, *Labour’s Path to Political Independence*, traces the wartime situation at the national level. The best discussion of the war’s complex impact on gender relations is Jill Roe’s essay, ‘Chivalry and Social Policy in the Antipodes’, *Historical Studies*, v. 22 (April 1987), pp. 395–410, especially 400–1.

9 The quotation is from Joyce, *Visions*, p. 5.

10 Wally Seccombe, ‘Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *Social History*, v. 2 (Jan. 1986), p. 57. It should be said that many husbands handed over their pay to their wives, reserving only a little for expenses. In this sense perhaps they paid their wives, but it was at their discretion and no law regulated the transaction.

11 Transcript of interview with Bert Grimmett, pp. 8–9.

12 In writing this I am uncomfortably aware that the task of reconciling such a statement with the continuing enthusiasm for the monarchy and the Honours system has not been begun. The latter may have seemed democratic here, for men like Barron and Sidey had modest origins, but enthusiasm for the monarchy poses a paradox.

13 Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town*, p. 18. Similarly, C. W. Shiel inspected every brick for his mansion; interview with Miss Shiel, p. 11.

14 ASC&J Minutes, 15 Aug. 1913. On 17 April 1914 they heard Arthur Witty of the Land Values League with equal enthusiasm.

15 No footnote should be needed for Cavanagh but sceptics should consult Sean O'Hagan, *The Pride of Southern Rebels: The History of Otago Rugby*, Dunedin, 1981, pp. 86–88. For Mercer, see the photograph of the Otago team of 1922 in Arthur C. Swan, *History of New Zealand Rugby Football 1870–1945*, Wellington, 1948, n.p [p. 352ff.] and RR, 19 Oct. 1923, p. 483.

16 Cartwright, 'Diary', 16 Jan. 1908 and Lyons, 'Reminiscences', p. 35. For Baeyertz see Greg Baughen, 'C.N. Baeyertz and *The Triad*, 1893–1915', research thesis, OU, 1980.

17 Joyce, *Visions*, p. 287.

18 Sidey spoke to the Loyal Caversham Lodge on 20 April 1898, *Rise and Progress*, p. 22 and for Tavemer, ASC&J, Minutes, 12 Dec. 1913.

19 Clarke, 'The Voyage to Otago, 1870s', pp. 101–3 and 'Earlier Days of Odd Fellowship in Dunedin', p. 3.

20 *Otago Witness*, 20 April 1910 and Olssen, 'New Zealand and the War', unpublished paper given at the Anzac Muster, Monash University, 1990.

21 'The Bad Old Times', in *Musings in Maoriland*, pp. 219–21.

22 *AJHR*, 1890, H–5, p. vi. I am indebted to John Martin for this point.

23 Transcripts of interviews with William Rutherford, p. 5 (for the quotation); Bert Grimmett, pp. 5–6, 13–14; Leslie Colbert, pp. 14–15; Robert Murray, pp. 4–5; and Ruby Lyons, 'Reminiscences', pp. 20–21, 45. P. J. Gibbons wrongly assumes that the values of 'the gentry, the urban bourgeoisie, and the lower middle class' achieved hegemony; see 'The Climate of Opinion', in Oliver & Williams (eds), *Oxford History of New Zealand*, pp. 302–3.

24 *Triad*, 1 Sept. 1908, p. 17.

25 Interview with Robert Rutherford, p. 7.

26 The definition is from *RR*, 20 Oct. 1922, p. 493.

27 Some labour leaders thought 'the singular lack of ambition among working-class parents' a major problem; ed. *Weekly Herald*, 6 Aug. 1910, p. 4. For the McIndoes, see Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, pp. 14–15. John McIndoe did his apprenticeship as a printer and Archibald McIndoe became a doctor and a pioneer of plastic surgery.

28 For instance see Bartlett, 'Woven Together', pp. 75, 146–8.

29 Jo Ward, 'For Reasons of their Own: A Study of the Otago Employers' Association, 1901–15', research thesis, OU, 1984, ch. 2.

30 W. B. Sutch, *Price Fixing in New Zealand*, New York, 1932.

31 I have analysed the intellectual origins of that idea more fully in 'W. T. Mills, E. J. B. Allen, J. A. Lee and Socialism in New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 10 (Oct. 1976), pp. 112–29.

32 *Stone's Directory* provides the basic information. See also transcripts of interviews with Robert Murray, p. 3 (tennis ballboy) and Bert Grimmett, p. 3 (his father helped his sisters set up as hairdressers). For McIndoe, see Mosley, *Faces from the Fire*, p. 24.

33 Transcript of interview with him by Melissa Reid, p. 9.

34 Only C. N. Ingram, the child of a strongly pro-Labour family, used such terms, but he thought of himself as 'lower working class' although his father was a master asphalter and then self-employed.

35 'Diary', [Jan.–March] 1908. See too Julie Hynes, 'The Solo Women of Caversham: Unloved, Unknown and Unequal', 452 class essay, OU, 1980 and Mosley, *Faces in the Fire*, p. 25 (the thesis has not survived).

36 The *Census* stopped measuring the extent of illiteracy in 1902 because it had clearly become a shrinking problem confined to an ageing cohort. There is fragmentary evidence, including the minutes of the Labourers' Union, to suggest that even on the eve of war many unskilled men had difficulty writing grammatically.

37 Quoted by Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens*, London, 1991, p. 572. See *Red Feds*, pp. 59–62, for a more detailed profile.

38 Donald Akenson, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand, 1860–1950*, Wellington, 1990, ch. 1, disputes the popular view that the Irish Catholics were concentrated in the ranks of the unskilled. See also P. J. O'Farrell, *Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia and New Zealand*, Sydney, 1990 and Richard Davis, *Irish Issues in New Zealand Politics, 1868–1922*, Dunedin, 1974.

39 Penn, *Skilled Workers*, p. 43 and ch. 5.

40 For the fullest discussion, N. B. Dearle, *Industrial Training*, London, 1914, pp. 20–27.

41 *Apprenticeship Question (New Zealand)*, 1923. *Precis of Proceedings at a Conference of Representatives of Employers, Workers, the Education*

*Department, and the Department of Labour ... 2nd May 1923 .... Report of Committee Appointed by the Conferences .... Precis of Proceedings at a Further Conference held on 15th August, 1923. Copy of Apprentices Act ...*, Wellington, 1923, pp. 11, 16–18. For further discussion see John E. Martin, *The Department of Labour*, forthcoming.

42 Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, pp. 429–34, points out that the United States Census classification of occupations, which shaped that used in New Zealand, classified all farm-related work and work involving animals as unskilled.

43 For the games and shows, interview with C. W. N. Ingram, p. 19; for the cattle, interview with Leslie Colbert, p.8; and for the ubiquity of horses until the end of the period, interview with William A. Campbell, pp. 3, 5–6.

44 Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, p. 42.

45 ‘Social Mobility in Caversham, 1901–1922’, Caversham Project working paper, 1988.

46 In the private sector a small Metal Workers’ Assistants’ Union existed early in the century, indicating the some men recognised that they had distinctive interests, although in 1906 they (unsuccessfully) asked to join the Labourers; Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, pp. 12–13.

47 ‘Diary’, 14 Jan. 1908 and Max Herz, *New Zealand; the Country and the People*, London, 1912, p. 376.

48 John Child, ‘Wages Policy and Wages Movements ...’, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, v. 13 (1971), pp. 164–76 and Gait, ‘Wealth and Income’, pp. 223–5 and Table 15.11, p. 223.

49 Holt, *Arbitration*, pp. 102–5, 158–9; Gait, ‘Wealth and Income’, chs 15 and 16; G. W. Clinkard, ‘Wages and Working Hours in New Zealand, 1897–1919’, *New Zealand Official Yearbook*, Wellington, 1919, pp. 917–34; and the Minister of Labour’s speech to the Conference on Apprenticeship, *Apprenticeship Question*, p. 4.

50 Scaffolders, men working with concrete, masons’ labourers, bricklayers’ labourers, hod carriers and stone sawers; Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, pp. 63–64.

51 *Awards*, v. 9 (1908), p. 8.

52 Kennedy, “‘Really Concerned Men’”, p. 54 and Gait, ‘Wealth and Income’, p. 229.

53 ‘Table Showing the Number of People Employed in Factories, Etc.’,

*AJHR*, 1911, H-11, pp. 42–56 (for Dunedin City).

54 Galt, 'Wealth and Income', pp. 219–21.

55 Theodore Caplow, *The Sociology of Work*, Minneapolis, 1954, pp. 41–43, points out that this assumption bedevils analysis of social status.

56 I am grateful to Dr Paul Roth for this information. Some cases were brought before 1873 but after that only infrequently. The last occurred in 1888.

57 See Brooking's summary of essays on the Protestant churches, 'Confessions', pp. 55–59, and Elizabeth Sinclair, 'The Catholics of Caversham 1890–1920', 452 class essay, OU, 1982, Tables 6 and 7.

58 Hugh Jackson, 'Churchgoing in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 17 (May 1983), pp. 43–59.

59 Cartwright, 'Diary', 17 and [31] Jan. 1908; transcript of interview with Miss Bolton, p. 9; and for the term 'matchy tarts' transcript of interview with Robert Murray, p. 7. Elvin Hatch, *Respectable Lives: Social Standing in Rural New Zealand*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992, provides the best analysis of refinement.

60 Hugh Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand, 1860–1930*, Wellington, 1987, pp. 77–82, 85, 167–8.

61 See Crossick, 'The Labour Aristocracy and its Values: A Study of Mid-Victorian Kentish London', *Victorian Studies*, v. 19 (March 1976), pp. 301–28; R. Q. Gray, *Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*, pp. 5–7, 138–43; T. R. Tholfsen, *Working-Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England*, London, 1976; and Neville Kirk, *The Growth of Working Class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England*, Beckenham, 1985, ch. 5.

62 V. 4, p. iii. See also Ernest Gellner, *Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History*, London, 1991, pp. 104–12, 211–13, 263 (I am indebted to Brian Moloughney for this reference) and C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford, 1962.

63 It needs to be borne in mind that in most European societies the state fixed by law the number of masters allowed in each craft; see, for instance, Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, New York, 1985, pp. 79–82.

64 Gellner, *Plough, Sword and Book*, p. 212.

65 For the previous two paragraphs see 'ASRS 1921 Conference

Interview with General Manager ...', bound in RR, 11 Feb. 1921, pp. 8, 9–11; ASRS *Biennial Conference, 1923...*, Wellington, 1923, p. 22; and ASC&J Minutes, *passim*. I am grateful to Shaun Ryan for information about the Engineers' Union; and for the Provident Fund, see Justin Strang, 'Welfare in Transition: Reform's Income Support Policy, 1912–1928', MA thesis, VUW, 1992, pp. 148–72.

66 The interview with Miss Shiel suggests that they were sent away less to escape the influences of the area, for they were permitted to play around the brickworks, than that of their 'wild' cousins.

67 *Mateship in Local Organisation: A Study of Egalitarianism, Stratification, Leadership, and Amenities Projects in a Semi-industrial Community of Inland New South Wales*, 2nd ed., St Lucia, 1978, pp. 46–55.

68 Hatch, *Respectable Lives*, pp. 159–79, found similar patterns when he studied a fanning community in South Canterbury in the 1970s and 1980s.

69 O'Hagan, *Pride of Southern Rebels*, pp. 94–95.

70 Gellner, *Sword, Plough and Book*, p. 263.

71 Transcripts of interviews with William A. Campbell, pp. 13–14; Robert Rutherford, p. 8; C. N. Ingram, p. 9; Bert Grimmett, p. 26; Robert Murray, p. 6; and William Rutherford, p. 7 (see the last two especially for 'Stringy' Wilson). See also Ruby Lyons, 'Reminiscences', pp. 22–28.

72 OW, 7 Dec. 1895, pp. 6, 8; 15 Feb. and 22 Feb. 1896, p. 6 (for both).

73 Conversation with Keith Harrison, Oct. 1992. To make matters worse, he had only recently persuaded his son to join Methvens.

74 Transcript of interview with Miss Shiel, p. 18.

75 *Ibid.*

76 Transcripts of interviews with C. N. Ingram, pp. 6, 21 and Robert Murray, p. 10 (he called it the Forbury gang but kept shutters on his windows, like most people who lived on David Street, to avoid having his windows broken regularly).

77 James Jackson to Sidey, 1 Oct. 1917, Sidey MSS, 605/20.

78 Transcripts of interviews with Leslie Colbert, p. 21; C. N. Ingram, p. 5; Robert Murray, p. 8; Robert Rutherford, pp. 7–8; William Rutherford, p. 14; Bert Grimmett, pp. 5–6, 14; G. Shiel, p. 11; and Miss C. Shiel, pp. 17–19.

79 'Diary', Jan.–March 1908. Hatch, *Respectable Lives*, pp. 167–70, discusses New Zealand perceptions of England and Scotland.

80 *Mateship*, p. 212.

81 See for instance Robert Chapman, 'Fiction and the Social Pattern', *Landfall*, v. 7, 1 (1953), pp. 26–58 and J. O. C. Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male—A History*, Auckland, 1987.

82 This may have created a growing link between families and particular jobs; see Stearns, *Labour Lives*, pp. 115–17. For an analysis of the romantic view of mateship, see Annabel Cooper, 'Textual Territories: Gendered Cultural Politics and Australian Representations of the War of 1914–1918', *Australian Historical Studies*, v. 25 (April 1993), pp. 403–21 and 'Gate Crashing Public Space/Longing and Masculine Romance', *New Zealand Journal of Literature*, forthcoming. On the lodges see the provocative analysis by Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, New Haven, 1989.

83 ODT, 22 May 1925, p. 6 and 23 May 1925, p. 17.

84 Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* and Gellner, *Plough, Sword, and Book*, p. 245.

85 See Arthur Stinchcombe, *Creating Efficient Industrial Administrations*, New York, 1974 and Barrington Moore Jr, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt*, New York, 1978, pp. 257–74.

86 James Cronin, *Industrial Conflict in Modern Britain*, London, 1979, first argued that success helped explain why industrial conflict occurred in waves.

87 Cited by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, pp. xlv–xlvi. For the relevant British background see Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp. 139–64.

88 It should be remembered that a less truculent form of industrial unionism had been preached by the Knights of Labour, Lister's *Otago Workman*, and the United Labour Party (1911–13).

89 OW, 7 Jan. 1893, p. 1 and 10 June 1893, p. 1.

90 *Rise and Progress of the Loyal Caversham Lodge*, pp. 15–24, 27.

91 I have dealt more fully with this in *Otago*, pp. 113–18, 122. For Sullivan's resignation see *RR*, 19 Oct. 1923, p. 473 and 14 Dec. 1923, p. 578.

92 In P. Munz (ed.), *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, 1969; 'Social Policy in the Liberal Period', *NZJH*, v. 13 (April 1979), pp. 25–33; and '100 Years of the Welfare State?',

in David Green (ed.), *Towards 1990*, Wellington, 1989, pp. 82–90.

93 McIvor, *The Rainmaker: A Biography of John Ballance*, Auckland, 1989. Hamer justified omitting labour legislation on the grounds that it had been fully dealt with by Keith Sinclair, *William Pember Reeves: New Zealand Fabian*, Oxford, 1965 and James Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand: The First Forty Years*, Auckland, 1986, chs 1–3.

94 Galt, 'Wealth and Income', demonstrates the accuracy of Oliver's insight but points out that inequalities still existed. Jim McAloon, 'Colonial Wealth: The Rich in Canterbury and Otago 1890–1914', Ph.D thesis, OU, 1993, provides a valuable analysis of the wealthy and their world.

95 Broadly speaking, I would argue, they were right; see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 2 vols, New York, 1978.

96 *The Working Class and Welfare: Reflections on the Political Development of the Welfare State in Australia and New Zealand, 1890–1980*, Wellington and Sydney, 1985 and Strang, 'Welfare in Transition'.

97 Penn, *Skilled Workers and the Class Structure*, p. 129.

98 Bartlett, 'Woven Together', pp. 103, 131–2 also notes that women did not question, let alone object to this structure of inequality; it seemed natural.

99 See for a fuller discussion my essay on 'The New Zealand Labour Movement and Race', forthcoming.

100 A point made by Eric Hobsbawm, 'Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?', *Economic History Review*, v. 37 (1984), pp. 355–72.

101 Eric Hobsbawm, 'Trade Union History', *Economic History Review*, v. 20 (1967), pp. 362–3.

102 Sutch later argued that New Zealand missed the opportunity to become an industrial nation in the 1890s; see his *Colony or Nation? Economic Crises in New Zealand from the 1860s to the 1960s*, Sydney, 1966, Part 1. Few have been persuaded.

103 *Labour and Politics*, Wellington, [1920?]. I have discussed Allen's views more fully in 'W. T. Mills, E. J. B. Allen, J. A. Lee and Socialism in New Zealand', *NZJH*, v. 10 (Oct. 1976), pp. 112–29.

104 Olssen and Len Richardson, 'The New Zealand Labour Movement, 1880–1920', in Eric Fry (ed.), *Common Cause: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Labour History*, Wellington and Sydney, 1986, pp. 7–15.

105 Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, ch. 3 (and especially pp. 99–100)

points out the link between low rates of geographic and social mobility, loss of control of the labour process, high levels of dependence, and the strength of paternalistic and authoritarian power relationships both at work and in the community.

## *Critical Bibliography*

Because this book brings together research done over a period of almost twenty-five years it makes more sense to provide a discussion of the key sources rather than an itemised list.

The Caversham data base has been compiled from the electoral rolls for the following electorates: Caversham (1902, 1905), Dunedin South (1908, 1911, 1922) and, increasingly, Dunedin Central. The data base also includes information from *John Stone's Directory for Otago and Southland* (1901–22). The trades directories have been used to check whether people should be classified as skilled or self-employed/small employer. Where necessary information has been checked in Henry Wise's *New Zealand Post Office Directory*. Although the directories provide a partial and distorted list of residents, discriminating particularly against women and transients, they contain information not available from the electoral rolls.

Three Caversham Project working papers provide analyses of the data and three provide information on the foundations. It is simplest to list them in chronological order. In 1982 Tom Brooking provided a discussion of the major sources and a summary of class essays on various subjects in “‘Confessions of a Caversham Conspirator’: a Report on the State of the Caversham Project’. In 1986 Judi Boyd, after enormous effort, completed the shortest report, the definitive ‘List of Streets in Caversham, 1901–22’ (what at first had seemed like a simple task became a nightmare because the city kept changing street names). My own longer ‘Alphabetical List of Occupations’ and ‘Occupations Classified by Occupational Group’ existed in handwritten form from 1979 and are now available in printed form. The justifications for the classifications still remain in my head. Most of them are self-evident.

A project such as this one is by definition collaborative. The authors of the reports took the responsibility for completing them and are ultimately responsible for them but they are to varying degrees the products of collaboration. Dr Brooking and I set up the project. I designed the

occupational classification and the coding schedule in 1978–79. Between 1979–82 he supervised teams of students each summer as they translated information in the electoral rolls and *Stone's Directory* on to the coding sheets. The data on the coding sheets was then entered on to the University of Otago's main-frame system. In 1986 Judi Boyd, hired to complete the data base, discovered that anomalies, inconsistencies and errors abounded. It would have been astonishing if this had not been the case. After all, even if only one coder with a photographic memory had been at work, it is not obvious that J. Smith is the same person as James McAulay Smith, even where the first is described as a fitter and the second as a mechanical engineer. Nor is it clear what relationship either name has to J. M. Smith. Ascertaining whether one is looking at one, two or three persons is a time-consuming and at times intellectually difficult task. Boyd completed the data base for everyone whose last name began with the letters G through T, and provided a preliminary analysis. In 1988 Tom Brooking and Boyd's successor, David Thomson, together with Dick Martin of Computing Services, produced 'Persistence in Caversham, 1902–1922 ...'. In the same year Thomson, Martin and I produced 'Social Mobility in Caversham ...'. In 1992 Thomson (with Boyd and Martin as co-authors) produced 'A Preliminary Statistical Survey of Population, Household Composition, Social Mobility, Geographic Mobility and Occupation'. As I wrestled with the final draft, Thomson also produced 'Caversham — 1902–1922: A Brief Survey of the Skilled ...'. Copies of two Caversham Project working papers, 'Persistence ...' and 'A Preliminary Statistical Survey ...', are available from the History Department at the University of Otago.

The interviews conducted by various members of the History 452 seminar in 1980–81, usually with old residents identified by Mrs Alma Rutherford, also provided an invaluable source. Although the interviews were conducted by various students the questionnaire was designed by the principal researchers to find out about childhood and growing up in Caversham. Transcripts of these, produced by Ms Paula Waby are held by the History Department and they are cited where appropriate in the text. Class essays for this seminar are also cited where appropriate in the text. Copies of all these essays are held in the Hocken Library. I have not cited conversations with innumerable people, however, although they have doubtless helped shape my argument at various points.

There are a surprising number of published works relating to institutions in Caversham. Most churches boast at least one history and Caversham School has updated its history whenever it has celebrated an anniversary. They are cited in the text where relevant. The Dunedin Public Library and the Hocken Library hold copies of all that I have used. I have relied heavily on Alma Rutherford, *The Edge of the Town: Historic Caversham as Seen Through its Streets and Buildings* (Dunedin, 1978), for much detail about the area and its inhabitants. K. C. McDonald, *City of Dunedin: A Century of Civic Enterprise* (Dunedin, 1968), has been my guide to the larger urban context. Despite the upbeat subtitle this is a splendid (if now old-fashioned) scholarly study. Two theses, both by historical geographers, have also been invaluable. G. N. Stedman, 'The South Dunedin Flat: A Study in Urbanisation, 1849–1965' (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1966), provided a very solid study of urbanisation and land use across the period, while W. A. V. Clark, 'Dunedin in 1901' (MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1961) contains excellent brief profiles of each administrative area in greater Dunedin focused on population density, the value of housing, the size of houses, the materials used to make them, access to amenities, and the occupations of inhabitants. The papers of T. K. Sidey, the Member of Parliament for much of Caversham throughout the period 1901–28, also contain much valuable information about the area. His newspaper clipping books are especially useful. Mabel Cartwright's 'Diary', Ruby Lyons's 'Reminiscences', the letterbook of the Caversham borough (Dunedin City archives), and the papers of the Independent Order of Oddfellows were also useful to varying degrees. *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand: Industrial, Descriptive, Historical, Biographical ...*, v. 4, *Otago and Southland Provincial Districts*, Christchurch, 1905, provided invaluable information on firms and people. My main complaint would be that it did not cover more of Caversham's firms.

For Chapters 3 through 6 *Stone's Directory* provided the basic source, supplemented with material from the 'Death Registers', held by the Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and the High Court's archive of wills and probates. The Department of Labour's ongoing series, *Awards, Agreements, Orders etc. of the Court of Arbitration* (1894–1930) provides an invaluable if partial insight into all unionised occupations and industries and invaluable lists of all employers cited by the union. The annual reports

of the Department of Labour, and especially the Dunedin report, also contain much valuable information and appear regularly in the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*. The report of the 'Sweating Commission' (*Appendices*, 1890, H-5), also contains a considerable amount of information, as did the information in the report and evidence on the Masters and Apprentices bill in the *Appendices to the Journals*, 1894, I-13.

There are few secondary sources relevant to the organisation of work and the arbitration system but see my *History of Otago* (Dunedin, 1984), Ch. 8 for the provincial context. For the best study of the arbitration system throughout the period see James Holt, *Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand: The First Forty Years*, (Auckland, 1986). I prepared this work for publication, following Holt's tragic death, and the effort to find out how a union bound particular employers to obey the Court's award, an issue at that stage unresolved in Holt's text, finally led me to the long lists of employers and their significance. Victor Clark, *The Labour Movement in Australasia: a Study in Social Democracy* (London, 1907), also remains invaluable for its incisive analysis of arbitration. For national developments see my *The Red Feds: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and the New Zealand Federation of Labour 1908-1914* (Auckland, 1988), Michelle Slade, 'Industrial Unionism in New Zealand, 1916-1925: A Study of the Transport Workers' Advisory Board and the Alliance of Labour' (MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1983), and R. C. J. Stone, 'The Unions and the Arbitration System, 1900-1937', in Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey* (Auckland, 1963). The starting point for any history of trades unionism in Otago remains, however, J. T. Paul, 'Trades Unionism in Otago: Its Rise and Progress, 1881-1912', *Souvenir Catalogue: Industrial Exhibition and Art Union*, Dunedin, [1912], pp. 69-141.

For the handicraft trades specifically there were few secondary sources. John Angus, *The Ironmasters: The First One Hundred Years of H. E. Shacklock Ltd* (Dunedin, 1973), provides an excellent case study of a self-made master. E. M. Seed, 'The History of the Brick, Tile, and Pottery Industries in Otago' (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1954) and Rob Calder, "'The Bastion of Brickmakers": The Caversham Brick and Pipemaking Industries 1884-1924' (452 class essay, University of Otago,

1982), provide useful discussions of those important local industries. J. T. Paul, *Dunedin Operative Bootmakers' Union: Fifty Years of Effort, 1876–1926* (Dunedin, 1926) and the transcript of Melissa Reid's interview with Robert Murray, 5 August 1981, provide useful accounts of the union and the industry (I supplemented Reid's interview with two of my own in 1994). Many of the other interviews also provide incidental information about handicraft trades. By and large, however, the handicraft trades have not only been ignored by historians but there are virtually no primary sources other than directories, electoral rolls, death registers, wills and photographs.

Women workers have been more studied, especially of late, but most work focuses on the tailoresses and their union. There is little on the labour process. Julie Hynes, 'The Solo Women of Caversham: Unloved, Unknown and Unequal' (452 class essay, University of Otago, 1980), first demonstrated how much could be learnt by taking those women who appeared in *Stone's Directory* and pursuing them into other sources. The transcripts of three interviews also proved helpful (to varying degrees they all focused on work): Carol Brown's interview with Miss Laura Bolton, 1985; Tony Bamford's interview with Mrs Norman, 1982; and Cathy Herries's interview with Miss Rose Roberts, 1982. John E. Bartlett's excellent study of the labour process in another industry, 'Woven Together: The Industrial Workplace in the Otago Woollen Mills, 1871–1930' (research thesis, University of Otago, 1987), provided me with useful comparisons. For the wider context see Karen Duder, 'Domestic Servants, Marriage and Mobility in Dunedin 1880–1890' (research thesis, University of Otago, 1989) and 'Hegemony or Resistance: The Women of the Skilled Working Class and the Ideology of Domesticity and Respectability' (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1992), two skilful studies. The best coverage of the national context remains Shelley Griffiths, 'Feminism and the Ideology of Motherhood in New Zealand, 1896–1930' (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1984). On women's paid work see my essay, 'Women, Work and Family: 1880–1926' in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society* (Auckland, 1980), Diana Unwin, 'Women in New Zealand Industry with Special Reference to Factory Industry and Conditions in Dunedin' (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1944), and Stephen Robertson's innovative article on 'Women Workers and the New Zealand Arbitration Court, 1894–1920', in Raelene Frances and Bruce

Scates (eds), *Women, Work and the Labour Movement in Australia Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Sydney, 1991).

The Tailoresses' Union has attracted a lot of attention but the absence of the union's archives makes it difficult to advance the story. J. T. Paul, *Our Majority and the Afteryears, 1889–1939: The Dunedin Tailoresses' Union* (Dunedin, revised ed. 1939), provides the indispensable starting point, not least because he had access to union records and knew many of the participants. Two theses enlarge the picture: R. T. Robertson, "'Sweating" in Dunedin 1888–1890' (research thesis, University of Otago, 1974) and Penelope Harper, 'The Dunedin Tailoresses' Union 1889–1914' (research thesis, University of Otago, 1988). None of these works paid any attention to the labour process and I am indebted to Carol Brown's class essay for History 452, 'The Clothing Trades' (1985). Tony Bamford, 'The Wax Vesta Match Factory' (452 class essay, University of Otago, 1982), provides the only study of that industry.

The carpenters have not fared much better and the history of their union has been even more neglected. Their own records, fortunately, still exist, and are now held by the Hocken Library. The archives of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners include not just the minutes of branch and executive meetings, but membership records, the secretary's letterbooks for the 1920s onwards, and records relating to the various benefits paid out. J. T. Paul, fortunately, collected an almost complete run of the *ASC&J Monthly Record*. The papers of C. J. Thorn, Hocken Library, are frustratingly thin on the matters central to this work but I am grateful to Mrs Loma Kent-Johnston, a descendant, for her help and co-operation over the years. Sir James Fletcher's 'Autobiography' also proved invaluable (this is held with the Fletcher Challenge archives at the firm's head office, Penrose).

New Zealand's railways have also been almost completely ignored and the workshops, among the largest industrial establishments in the country from the 1890s until the 1960s, were completely ignored before the Caversham Project. This has entailed a vast amount of work because I could not understand Hillside without a fairly solid grasp of the wider system. Lucy Duncan's class essay for History 452, 'The Hillside Railway Workshops', (1982), proved an excellent first study. Jeremy Brecher and I have also written two papers on New Zealand's railway workshops: 'New

Zealand and United States Labour Movements: The View from the Workshop Floor’, in Jock Phillips (ed.), *New Worlds? The Comparative History of New Zealand and the United States* (Wellington, 1989) and ‘The Power of Shop Culture: The Labour Process in the New Zealand Railway Workshops, 1890–1930’, *International Review of Social History*, v. 37 (1992), pp. 350–75. Based on my work in National Archives and my discovery of the Addington inquiry (in those halcyon days I used to browse in the *Appendices*), I also wrote ‘Railway Workers and Scientific Management’, published in John E. Martin and Kerry Howe (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History* (Palmerston North, 1991), pp. 128–41.

Some of the archives of the Hillside workshops have survived, and are held by the Dunedin branch of National Archives or remain at the workshops. Most of them have disappeared, unfortunately, and so has the union’s first minute book (the first extant minute book for the Hillside branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants begins in 1927). The annual reports for the Railways Department, published annually in the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, proved useful while several files in the Department’s archives, held by National Archives, proved very useful on particular topics. The report and evidence for the Addington inquiry, published in the *Appendices*, 1909, D–4 and D–4A, proved invaluable, as did the *Report of the Royal Commission into the Railway Service, together with ... Evidence and Appendices* (Wellington, 1924). There were occasional letters about the workshops in the Sidey papers but the interviews proved indispensable: namely, Jeremy Brecher’s interviews with Lionel Jones, 13 March 1987; W. M. Pimley, 30 March 1987; David Fenby 13 April 1987; and our combined interviews with R. W. Rutherford, 14 April 1987 and Jim Addison, 24 April 1987 (the last was unrecorded but I wrote up notes immediately afterwards and the tapes for the others are held by the Otago Early Settlers’ Association). The absence of union records for Hillside forced me to work my way through the minutes of the national executive of the ASRS for 1889–1912 and the union’s journal, *New Zealand Railway Review* (1896–1928). The ASRS archives, held by the National Union of Railwaymen, Wellington, also contained invaluable files. It is a sad comment on the priorities of the country’s archivists that so many of the archives relevant to this important

industry, including union records, are still inadequately housed in the workshops.

The first chapter on politics, like the previous one, has been something of a jigsaw except that I have been working on it for well nigh twenty years. The files of Sam Lister's *Otago Workman* (1887–1901), held only by the Otago Early Settlers' Association and the Mitchell Library in Sydney, profoundly shaped my understanding and interpretation of politics on The Flat during that period and especially during the years of turmoil, 1888–93. I have long been of the view that labour politics cannot properly be studied without using trade union records and the minute books of the Dunedin ASC&J, the national ASRS, and the Typographers' Association, held in the Hocken Library, proved very helpful in understanding the preoccupations of skilled men. So too did the evidence given to the Sweating Commission, which was published in the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1890, H–5. I first dealt with this and the response of the local community in 'The Sweating Agitation', *New Zealand's Heritage*, v. 4 (1972), pp. 1496–1502. J.T. Paul's *Dunedin Operative Bootmakers' Union and Our Majority ... The Dunedin Tailoresses' Union* (Dunedin, 1910) remain useful. The various papers which Paul collected for his 'Trades Unionism in Otago ...' are indispensable and are to be found in his papers, Hocken Library (still, sadly, unsorted and with only a primitive finding aid). William Downie Stewart's papers, Hocken Library, also contain invaluable letters which he had the wit to collect. The *Proceedings of the New Zealand Trades and Labour Conference* (Dunedin, 1885) are invaluable, while the *Globe* (1889–93), which appeared three times a week and was largely owned by the Trades and Labour Council, helps to understand Dunedin's politics and place the *Otago Workman* in context.

There is a sizeable secondary literature relating to this turbulent period. A. H. McLintock, *The History of Otago: The Origins and Growth of a Wakefield Class Settlement* (Dunedin, 1949), Ch. 13 remains the best starting point. John Angus's prodigious and innovative thesis, 'City and Country: Change and Continuity: Electoral Politics in Otago, 1877–1893' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Otago, 1976), proved invaluable for the wider context, as did David Hamer, *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power* (Auckland, 1988). J. M. Boyd, 'Urban Radicals: A Study of the Radical Movement in Dunedin, 1887–1893' (research thesis, University of

Otago, 1984), provides an excellent analysis of that subject and in particular the Protection League. Clive Pearson's exhaustive study, 'The Political Labour Movement in Dunedin, 1890–96' (research thesis, University of Otago, 1974), remains indispensable (he made the unlikely discovery that the Downie Stewart papers had a small but rich collection of relevance to this topic). J. D. Salmond, 'The History of the New Zealand Labour Movement from the Settlement to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1940–1894' (Ph.D. thesis, University of New Zealand (Otago), 1924), has not yet been superseded (his revised version of this, prepared in his retirement and given to the Hocken Library, is in many respects more useful and appears to have been filed as part of his papers). Desmond Crowley's short edition of Salmond's thesis, *New Zealand Labour's Pioneering Days: The History of the Labour Movement in N.Z. from 1840 to 1894* (Auckland, 1950), is more accessible but less complete.

Chapter 8 draws heavily on the papers of T. K. Sidey. Unfortunately, with few exceptions, only the inwards correspondence survives, although the newspaper clipping books are very useful. For the period from 1893 until about 1905, the *Workman's* successors, *Otago Liberal* (1901–05) and *The Beacon* (1905–07), proved useful. Paul persuaded the Trades and Labour Council to buy the *Otago Liberal* but this, and his editorship, proved to be the kiss of death. From this time onwards, however, his own papers contain an increasingly full record of his activities and extensive newspaper clipping books. As before, union minute books proved essential for understanding the attitudes of workers throughout the period. The *ASC&J Monthly Report* and *New Zealand Railway Review* also proved valuable. In following the activities of Members of Parliament the *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* and the files of the House Labour Bills committee, National Archives, proved indispensable. The *Weekly Herald*, owned by the Wellington Trades and Labour Council, and the Socialist Party's *Commonweal*, also contained useful information from time to time.

For the period from 1911 until the end of the 1920s the *Maoriland Worker* (later named the *New Zealand Worker*) provides the fullest regular coverage of labour in New Zealand and intermittent reports on Dunedin. Paul's clipping books, which contain his own weekly articles for the *Otago Daily Times* on union matters, are also very useful. Paul's papers contain abundant material on his role in the complex events of 1912–19 and

innumerable reports. They need to be supplemented with the letterbooks of Arthur McCarthy, now held by the Hocken Library, which cover his period as treasurer for the United Labour Party (1912–13) and secretary of the Dunedin branch of the Social Democratic Party (1913–19). Mark Silverstone's papers (Hocken Library) also contain some important reports and his notes on various meetings. The fullest coverage of developments among skilled workers on The Flat remained, however, the minute books and (for the 1920s) letter books of the ASC&J and the reports on the doings of the Hillside branch of the ASRS in *New Zealand Railway Review*. My own experience, both in the Caversham branch of the Labour Party and as its delegate to the Otago Labour Representation Committee, in unexpected ways kept illuminating issues; sadly, neither organisation could find any minute books for the period before the late 1930s. I met J. E. MacManus's daughter and Fred Jones's niece and nephew in the Caversham branch.

The secondary literature is slighter for this period. I provide a discussion of labour politics and the larger provincial context in *A History of Otago*, Chs 8 and 9. B. S. Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence: The Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party, 1900–1919* (Auckland, 1980), provides a useful coverage of the national context but does not explore (or acknowledge) the different regional political cultures or the way in which the meaning of words changed. The excellent thesis by Richard V. Tubbs, 'Mark Silverstone and the Dunedin Labour Movement with Particular Reference to the Years 1912–1920' (research thesis, University of Otago, 1981), proved very helpful in unravelling the complex in-fighting of that period. Justin Strang, 'Against the Tide: Arthur McCarthy and the Formation of the Labour Party' [1987] was also helpful. I have also benefited from several other research theses done under my supervision: C. J. Meade, 'The Otago Labour Movement, 1912–13' (1976), K. L. Woodley, 'Conflict and Compromise: Labour in Otago, 1913–1916' (1976), Paul Voight, 'The United Labour Party of New Zealand' (1977), and Shaun F. Ryan, 'The Politics of Pragmatism: J. T. Paul and the New Zealand Labour Movement 1916–1922' (1993).

For the final chapter the various interviews proved valuable in providing detail about Caversham, the social pattern and adult memories of childhood. These interviews have all been transcribed and are held by the History Department (the interviewer is named first): Helen Brownlie with Frederick

George Edison Bell, 1980; Susan Harkness with C. W. N. Ingram, 1980; Adair Bruorton and Miss C. J. Shiel, 1980; Louise Tallentire with G. Shiel, 1980; Melissa Reid with Robert Murray, 1981; Margaret Wallis with R. W. Maskill, 1981; and my interviews with Robert Rutherford (1980) and H. Grimmett (1993, 1994). There are also transcripts of interviews with Leslie Colbert (1982), William A. Campbell (n.d.), and Mr and Mrs William Rutherford (1981). On the skilled/unskilled differential see G. W. Clinkard, 'Wages and Working Hours in New Zealand, 1897–1919', *New Zealand Official Yearbook*, Wellington, 1919, pp. 917–34; John Child, 'Wages Policy and Wages Movements ...', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, v. 13 (1971), pp. 164–76; and Margaret Gait, 'Wealth and Income in New Zealand 1870 to 1939' (Ph.D. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1985). On egalitarianism, status and the importance of refinement the best study is Elvin Hatch, *Respectable Lives: Social Standing in Rural New Zealand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992), while H. G. Oxley, *Mateship in Local Organisation: A Study of Egalitarianism, Stratification, Leadership, and Amenities Projects in a Semi-industrial Community in Inland New South Wales* (2nd ed., with a preface by Oxley and Nancye Kew, St Lucia, 1978) is often suggestive. Jim McAloon, 'Colonial Wealth: The Rich in Canterbury and Otago 1890–1914' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Otago, 1993), was completed too late for me to cite but as his supervisor I benefited from my conversations with him and the opportunity to read his drafts. The best study of New Zealand's distinctive welfare system, and a suggestive work as I developed my argument, remains Francis Castles, *The Working Class and Welfare; Reflections on the Political Development of the Welfare State in Australia and New Zealand, 1890–1980* (Wellington and Sydney, 1985).

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Endpapers: Caversham, 1905. Many street names were changed following amalgamation with the city. Some changes occurred much later and may confuse any reader familiar with the area: notably, Cargill Road is now Hillside Road; Hillside Road is now King Edward Road; and Prince Edward Road is now Bayview Road. Surrey Street and Ruskin Terrace were once part of Forbury Road.

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